

DEVELOPING REDEMPTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE RELEVANT CHURCH:
ONE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH'S REPRESENTATION
OF BIBLICAL CORE VALUES

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BY
ERIC WENDEL LEE, SR.

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To my loving wife and chief editor:
thank you for facilitating our family
and every milestone moment in my life and ministry.

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
let our rejoicing rise,
high as the list'ning skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea
sing a song full of faith that the dark past has taught us,
sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
let us march on till victory is won.
—James Weldon Johnson, *The African American National Anthem*

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To my brilliant, beautiful and gifted children, I pray that you will forever consider the centrality of Christ and His church in our past, present and future.

To my parents, thanks for the foundation.

To the Springfield Baptist Church, thank you for your love, support and patience for the past two decades.

GLOSSARY

African American Church - This term will refer to historical churches and new church plants that minister largely to African Americans and Caribbean Americans whose socioeconomic context is characterized by the categorical discrepancies outlined in chapter one of this thesis-project. This definition is inclusive of any church with a diverse congregation and leadership.

Redemptive Expression - Redemption is derived from a Latin root meaning “to buy back,” thus meaning the liberation of any possession, object, or person, usually by payment of a ransom. In Hebrew the root word is *padah* or “to substitute”. In Greek the root word means “to loose” and so “to free”. Derived from a history of enslavement and exile, the Hebrew Bible is replete with messianic expectation for national redemption. Redemption is not merely eschatological but the restoration of intrinsic value and worth from socioeconomic and political oppression or personal depravity.

Religious Experience - A spiritual encounter or experience where an individual or a group is confronted with divine truth, be it through liturgy, worship, preaching, Bible study, miracles or other natural and supernatural phenomenon. Examples: 1) Genesis 32:24-32 The patriarch Jacob wrestled with God all night. 2) Luke 4:14-21 Jesus declares that the prophetic expectation of Isaiah has been fulfilled by his messianic presence. 3) Acts 2:1-7 The Day of Pentecost gives way to the birth of the Church accomplished by the visitation of the Holy Spirit.

ABSTRACT

This thesis-project will craft a church leadership methodology that empowers the contemporary African American church to be the zeitgeist of redemptive expression within its community. Henceforth, a reclamation of the biblical core values that subsequently enabled the African American church to be the “cultural womb” of its community is required. To retain and enhance this cultural influence, leadership must align biblical beliefs, core values and redemptive practices as recorded in Acts 2. The corresponding curriculum is for contemporary African American church leadership and seeks to achieve a more biblically rooted and socially relevant church beyond the post-modern age.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

“What difference does the church make?” When I was younger, my peers would often ask this question with regard to my upbringing in the church. They were not intentionally being irreverent. But as church “nones and dones” or church outsiders they asked a basic question that every church insider should be capable of answering, “What difference does it make?”¹ Today, it is more important than ever that church leadership, in the face of expansive secularization, be intentional about developing a church that makes a tangible difference in the qualitative welfare of its community.

The questions and assertions raised by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya’s *The Black Church in African American Experience* require our theological and ecclesiastical consideration. The authors assert that “the complexities of black churches as social institutions require a more dynamic and interactional theoretical perspective because they have played more complex roles and assumed more comprehensive burdens in their communities than is true of most white and ethnic churches.”² By historical necessity, the African American church has been the zeitgeist of social influence since the 18th century, through the antebellum period of American history, to the civil rights era, and until this very day. Today, the myth of a post racial America has emerged due to progress in African American civil rights, in education, in wealth

1. Ronnie McBrayer, “Nones and Dones,” [RonnieMcBrayer.org](https://ronniemcbrayer.org), February 20, 2017, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://ronniemcbrayer.org/2017/02/20/nones-and-dones/>.

2. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 18.

and in political influence, particularly following the 2008 election of Barrack Obama as the nation's first African American President of the United States of America. Progress has been made yet stunning disparities still exist within minority communities. H. Roy Kaplan reminds us in stark terms, "It is still a fact that darker skinned people are treated differently than lighter skinned people in the United States and in other white dominated societies."³ Minority communities are still the "underclass" in a nation where wealth inequality continues to persist. Against this backdrop, the contemporary African American church must represent Christ to a community that is still in need of its witness, agency and advocacy. In addition, it is against this backdrop that Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr., Professor of Religion and Chair of the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University, pronounced the death of the historical African American church: "But such a church loses its power. Memory becomes its currency. Its soul withers from neglect. The result is all too often church services and liturgies that entertain, but lack a spirit that transforms, and preachers who deign for followers instead of fellow travelers in God."⁴ Is the African American church at a cultural crossroads that threatens its ability to engender consciousness of its complex context?

I was introduced to this crossroad as a history major at Morehouse College, the alma mater of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I answered my call to the ministry while seated in the Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel. I have since graduated from seminary and completed my 20th year in pastoral ministry of a 140-year-old African American church. This milestone in ministry is reflective of a larger familial context whereby my father has pastored a

3. H. Roy Kaplan, *The Myth of Post-Racial America: Searching for Equality in the Age of Materialism* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 4.

4. Eddie Glaude, Jr., "The Black Church Is Dead," *Huffington Post*, last revised August 23, 2012, accessed August 25, 2019, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/eddie-glaude-jr-phd/the-black-church-is-dead_b_473815.html.

150-year-old African American church for the past 45 years. I am a product of the “black church” despite the cultural ambiguity in defining this institution. My vocational chronology is undergirded by its historical significance and fidelity with biblical theology. Likewise, my thesis is motivated by a desire to assist the church in carrying out its biblical mission of redemption.

This thesis-project is an intentional effort to identify and commend biblical core beliefs and values to the emerging leadership of the African American Christian church. A relevant church for tomorrow is dependent on a biblically rooted church today. I have dedicated my pastoral administration to the cultivation of core beliefs and values; this thesis-project is a reflection of my pastoral work. I hope to help the reader develop church leadership that will restore biblical foundations of the contemporary church and compel the church to be both relevant and redemptive in its current context.

Thesis Question

The thesis-project asks the relevant question, *how can the contemporary African American church claim its biblical roots and provide relevant redemptive ministry that transforms our community?* The primary assertion of this project is that the African American church should reclaim the biblical principles and redemptive practices present at the church’s foundation in Acts 2. Toward this end, I have developed a curriculum based on my pastoral experience at Springfield Baptist Church in Conyers, Georgia, that inspires and equips church leaders (ministers, officers, lay leaders, etc.) to promote a biblically rooted and socially relevant church beyond the second millennia of the Christian church by the establishment and implementation of core values.

Intent

In this thesis-project I develop a series of seminars for pastors and church leadership to navigate the cultural encumbrances of the postmodern era, to engage the church in biblically authentic praxis, and to cultivate a more constructive impact on the larger African American context. Furthermore, I will demonstrate the church's biblical responsibility to transform the social, political and economic context that confine and restrict rather than promote "human flourishing".⁵ I will outline the cultural context of the African American community and promote a church model that transforms the contemporary church into a center of redemption. This church model will be predicated on the Redemptive Model as taught by Dr. Rod Cooper in the *Redemptive Leadership in the African American Context* track of Gordon-Conwell's Doctor of Ministry program. It is a model that promotes competency, principles, character, redemption and transformation. This church model originates in the ministry of Jesus Christ (Matthew 9) and is implemented by his disciples in Acts 2. This is the redemptive work of the church promoted by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement and employed by many successful churches today.

The Crises in My Context

My pastorate began in May 1999 in a suburban community 30 miles east of the bustling metropolis of Atlanta, Georgia. The newly minted "international city" of Atlanta, given its recent hosting of the Centennial Olympic Games, made this suburban area an attractive destination for young families seeking to rear children. Likewise, low-income families displaced by the gentrification in Atlanta began moving eastward. Out of this economic groundswell emerged the

5. Andy Crouch, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2013), 14.

only pastoral appointment that I have ever known. I surmised that as a Morehouse graduate, third generation pastor, seminary trained theologian that I was well equipped to lead the church of the living God into the new millennium. The Springfield Baptist Church of Covington, Georgia, with its 120 years of black southern Baptist heritage in the changing rural south, was compelled to reconsider its emerging identity in the epicenter of Atlanta's urban sprawl. Years later, this great faith risk shared by pastor and parishioners resulted in explosive growth. Within five years, the traditional rural family church was no longer a part-time parish with an aging congregation. Springfield emerged as the spiritual headquarters for native residents and more increasingly a church home for the community's newest residents in a county ranked 4th in national residential growth. The church expanded to multiple worship services then multiple worship locations. I was able to transition into full-time ministry inside of one year. The church budget multiplied exponentially. We founded a daycare center, accumulated 70 acres for future construction, and moved twice; each time we tripled our seating capacity from the previous location. Every anticipated indicator of church growth had been surpassed. The membership swelled from 100 to more than 7,000. The budget was growing, and the new buildings had provided both space and greater expectation.

Growth brought greater challenges. The cultural context of African American ministry began to make unprecedented demands on our church. The *New York Times* published an article in 2015 entitled "1.5 Million Missing Black Men" which reported, "They are missing, largely because of early deaths or because they are behind bars."⁶ Our church began to witness teenagers derailing their precious futures with felony convictions. Many of our young black males were

6. Justin Wolfers, David Leonhardt, and Kevin Quealy, "1.5 Million Missing Black Men," *The New York Times*, April 20, 2015, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/04/20/upshot/missing-black-men.html>.

sentenced to multiple decades of incarceration, displaced from their homes, churches and schools. Within our congregation, we had a college student, mentor and ministry leader convicted to a mandatory 30-plus year sentence. We also saw a drastic increase in homicides which unfortunately were domestic in nature. We experienced youth and young couples from our congregation lose their lives to avoidable conflicts and family violence. We witnessed high dropout rates, low graduation rates and the rise of single parent homes.

Our community was impacted by a modern day “Cain & Abel” style homicide that left a younger brother deceased and an older brother convicted of his murder. The younger brother, though not a member of our congregation, was a frequent visitor and had two siblings in our church. I recall a chance encounter with the victim months before his untimely death in a local sporting goods store. After isolating him away from his friends, he struck a confessional tone with me about his life’s direction. He was a young teenage father of a baby girl. He had recently dropped out of the local high school and was involved in the distribution of narcotics. I never understood why he felt so comfortable sharing these unfortunate details of his life, but I have not seen such honesty from parishioners since that providential encounter. I thanked him for his honesty and as pastoral etiquette requires, I sought to persuade him that his life choices had horrific consequences. I asked him to consider making new choices and offered to walk him through the changes that would enable him to secure a future. I told him, “If you want to get out of this life, come and see me!”

The call or the visit never came. The next time I saw him, he lay horizontal in a casket in a suit that I donated from my own wardrobe. Yet, from the moment of that encounter, I was challenged to consider what I would have done had he taken me up on my offer. How would the church have addressed the significant socioeconomic barriers in his life in a timetable that would

encourage him to surrender his illicit income? How would we have convinced him to surrender his position as a provider? How would we have inspired him to return to school or obtain a GED? How would we have made him a wage earner despite his criminal past, lack of marketable skills and education? Our church had established that we were good at “having church” on Sunday mornings. We are good at worship, budgets and buildings. We are good at church but were we good at redemption? The Bible emphatically teaches, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”⁷ Given the divine authority bestowed to the church, I assert that the church should have an answer for the socioeconomic depravity of our world. The authentication of a successful church requires redemptive results in the communities in which we operate and serve. This episode in ministry compelled me to develop a church methodology that could answer the many questions that emerged from my one encounter with a confessed sinner who needed a church that could provide him with redemptive alternatives.

When the fog clears from these traumatic events, the post-traumatic effects linger within our community for decades. Before we can apply redemptive ministry to these repeating tragic events, attention must be given to the systemic, contextual milieu that produces them. These events do not occur in a vacuum within the African American context. Let’s examine the problems of the African American context that demand a redemptive response: Dropouts (Education), Detention & Drugs (Incarceration), Disease & Drugs (Health), Divorce (Family), Depression & Debt (Cycle of Poverty), Death & Family Violence (Life Expectancy), and Dignity (Cultural Identity).

7. Romans 12:2. All scripture citations are taken from the New International Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

The Crisis of Education - Dropouts

The tragedy in life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.

—Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays

Since the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment preserved the freedom of African Americans, the country has struggled with the question of how to educate former slaves and their descendants. African Americans suffered from the insufficient efforts of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands and the Great Betrayal of 1876 that withdrew military and public policy support during reconstruction. Compounding this crisis was the rise of white nationalist violence and the abject poverty of former slaves. Federal education initiatives led to the founding of Historically Black Colleges & Universities and hundreds of other public schools for former slaves. Many of these institutions are indebted to the African American church for their founding and sustenance. Ideological differences regarding pedagogy and methodology led to the great debate of Booker T. Washington's "bootstrap", trade school solution versus W.E.B. Dubois' "talented tenth" solution. This age produced one of the 20th Century's foremost ministers, educators, scholars and social activists in the personality of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, who served as the president of Morehouse College for 27 years (1940-1967) and the President of the Atlanta Public Schools in Georgia. Today, generations after these impressive gains, the public education system is failing many inner-city families and students.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation defines "dropouts" as "teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in high school and are not high school graduates."⁸ Students who

8. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "National Kids Count Report," accessed August 25, 2019, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/73-teens-ages-16-to-19-not-in-school-and-not-high-school-graduates?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/870,573,869,36,868/any/380,381>.

graduate on time are most prone to continue their education beyond high school. In his 2014 publication entitled *Too Important to Fail*, journalist Tavis Smiley describes the essence of the achievement gap in education for African Americans acknowledging that only 53% graduate from high school, far below the 75% rate for whites and Asian Americans.⁹

The Children's Defense Fund, according to Smiley, reports "that 85% of Black children do not read or do math at grade level by fourth grade."¹⁰ The other telling indicator of public education deficiency is the degree to which disciplinary problems affect classroom instruction time. Smiley demonstrates that African American males in grades K-12 were 2.5 times more likely to be suspended from school as compared to white students.¹¹ Given some of the more severe behavioral dilemmas in public education, the alternative school programs have become the unfortunate failsafe for minorities in public education. It appears likely that the public policy solutions and the public sentiment is to abandon failing schools for charter and private schools. Is there a redemptive solution as the church seeks to make a difference in the achievement gap in public education?

The Crisis of Mass Incarceration – Detention & The War on Drugs

For the Lord listens to the needy and does not despise His own who are prisoners.

—Psalm 69:33

9. Tavis Smiley, *Too Important to Fail: Saving America's Boys* (New York: Smiley Books, 2011), LOC 486, Kindle.

10. Smiley, *Too Important to Fail*, LOC 319, Kindle.

11. Smiley, *Too Important to Fail*, LOC 531, Kindle.

Michelle Alexander describes the impact of a “school to prison pipeline” for African American boys in her book entitled *The New Jim Crow*. Alexander argues that the discrepancies and deficiencies present within the African American community derive from the mass incarceration of African Americans within the prison system. She describes as the central thesis of her perennial work “that something akin to a racial caste system currently exists in the United States.”¹² Summarily, the war on drugs and other public policy establishing mandatory minimum sentences gives rise to the prison industrial complex in America. Alexander labels this phenomenon the “new Jim Crow,” making young black boys the prize commodity of the prison industry. Prison and a history of encounters with the criminal justice system were operative in the scenarios that dramatize the crisis in my ministerial context described earlier.

It is common knowledge that the United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. More than thirty years after the war on drugs began in the early 1980s, the prison/jail population rose from 300,000 to more than 2 million.¹³ Donald Braman, citing Department of Corrections data from the year 2000, estimates that three out of four African American youth in the inner city of Washington D.C. will be involved in the criminal justice system.¹⁴ This data supports Alexander’s thesis that the reality of mass incarceration permeates the great majority of urban community centers, including my ministerial context at Springfield.

According to a Pew Center on the States study in 2009, the state of Georgia had one in thirteen adults in the justice system. As of December 2011, the Georgia Department of Corrections held 55,075 prison inmates and employed over 13,000 staff members. The agency's

12. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 2.

13. Marc Mauer, *Race to Incarcerate*, rev. ed. (New York: The New Press, 2006), 33.

14. Donald Braman, *Doing Time on the Outside: Incarceration and Family Life in Urban America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 3.

FY2011 budget was approximately \$968.2 million. The Georgia Department of Corrections supervised 163,709 probationers as of December 31, 2011, through 113 offices. The cost of probation ranges from \$1.43 to \$3.46 per day depending on the type of supervision. As of FY2010, the parolee population was 22,403. Parole officers work under the guidance of the State Board of Pardons and Parole. It costs on average \$4.65 per day to supervise a parolee. The cost of this confinement underscores Alexander's thesis that the prosperity of mass incarceration is a proven revenue generator to the demise of the African American community. According to the Department of Justice records, there were 160,442 black men in prisons versus 183,202 white men in 1981. By 2009, incarcerated black men outnumbered incarcerated white men, 841,000 to 694,000. The National Academies Press argues, "Serving time in prison has become a normal life event among recent birth cohorts of African American men who have not completed high school."¹⁵ This disparity continued within the subsequent decade according to a United States Sentencing Commission report. The most recent report indicates, "Black male offenders received sentences on average 19.1 percent longer than similarly situated White male offenders during the Post-Report period (fiscal years 2012-2016)."¹⁶ African Americans are incarcerated in state prisons across the country at more than five times the rate of whites, and at least ten times the rate in five states.¹⁷ Is there a redemptive solution from the church to end the school to prison pipeline that feeds the prison industrial complex of America?

15. National Research Council, "The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences" (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2014), 34, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.nap.edu/read/18613/chapter/4>.

16. United States Sentencing Commission, "Demographic Differences in Sentences," November 14, 2017, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.ussc.gov/research/research-reports/demographic-differences-sentencing>.

17. Ashley Nellis, "The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons," The Sentencing Project, June 14, 2016, accessed August 25, 2019, <http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>.

The Crisis of Health – Disease & Drugs

As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

—Luke 17:12-13

African Americans suffer disproportionately in practically every major category of disease. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death for all Americans with an average of 600,000 deaths per year.¹⁸ In 2010, African American men had the highest rate of cancer at 600 instances per 100,000 men and the rate of dying from cancer was 280 deaths per 100,000 men, the highest of all demographics reported. African American women are 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women.¹⁹ The third leading cause of death among African Americans are strokes. According to the CDC, “Risk of having a first stroke is nearly twice as high for blacks than for whites, and blacks are more likely to die following a stroke than are whites.”²⁰ In the area of sexually transmitted diseases, the rate of new HIV infections in African Americans is 8 times that of whites accounting for 44% of all new infections in 2010.²¹

18. Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention at the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, “Heart Disease Facts,” CDC, November 28, 2017, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm>.

19. Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, “Health Disparities in Cancer”, CDC, last updated May 2, 2019, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dccp/resources/features/cancerhealthdisparities/index.htm>.

20. Dariush Mozaffarian, Emelia J. Benjamin, Alan S. Go, et al. “Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2016 Update: A Report from the American Heart Association,” *Circulation* 133, no. 4 (April 2016): 128.

21. National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, “Health Disparities in HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STDs, and TB,” CDC, October 4, 2016, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/healthdisparities/africanamericans.html>.

Other health factors have a negative result on the lives of African Americans. These include obesity, hypertension, and drug and alcohol abuse. Sadly, the eighth leading killer of African Americans is homicide.

It is largely believed that mental health is a highly stigmatized and misunderstood factor in African American health. African Americans face cultural obstacles in receiving mental health support according to a 2014 National Alliance on Mental Illness report.²² Only 2% of psychiatrists, 2% of psychologists and 4% of social workers in this country are African American. Many African Americans seek assistance for mental health issues at religious institutions and from family and friends instead of trained social science professionals. The people who have the worst health disparities are the least likely to receive adequate health care. Is there some redemptive expression to be brought to bear by the Christian church in the African American community as relates to physical and mental health?

The Crisis of Low Life Expectancy – Death & Family Violence

Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

—Psalm 90:10

In a February 2011 article, *Time Magazine* reported data from scientists who suggest that newborn children can realistically expect to live for 100 years.²³ Given the tremendous health discrepancies, *Time Magazine's* optimistic prognostication excludes African American children.

22. National Alliance on Mental Illness, “Black History Month: A Historic Call to Action,” February 12, 2014, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/February-2014/Black-History-Month-A-Historic-Call-for-Action>.

23. Laura Blue, “Your Kids Could Reach 100,” *Time Magazine*, February 11, 2010, accessed August 25, 2019, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1963392_1963367_1963383,00.html.

In 2011, the average African American life expectancy was 75.3 years, compared to 78.8 years for the average white American.

Domestic violence or family violence also compromises African American life expectancy. As long as homicide continues to be the fifth leading cause of death for African American males we will continue to see these discrepancies.²⁴ Femicide, the homicide of women, “is among the leading causes of death for African American women between the ages of 15 and 44, and many of these femicides are committed by the victims’ intimate partners.”²⁵ How can redemptive ministry contribute to improve the life expectancy of African Americans within the body of Christ?

The Crisis of Family – Divorce

We believe that black families have arrived at a point of maximum danger, which is also a point of maximum opportunity.

—Andrew Billingsley, *Climbing Jacob’s Ladder*

In his 1992 publication, Andrew Billingsley trumpeted the meritorious assets of the African American family with regard to heritage, addressing adversity, values, humanitarianism, resilience and adaptability. Though optimistic about the African American family, Billingsley is also honest about its weaknesses and threats that compromise its advancement. He defines the African American family as “an intimate association of persons of African descent who are related to one another by a variety of means including blood, marriage, formal adoption,

24. Office of Minority Health & Health Equity, “Leading Causes of Death (LCOD) by Age Group, Black Males – United States, 2014,” CDC, last updated June 27, 2017, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/lcod/men/2014/black/index.htm>.

25. “Domestic Violence Among African Americans,” [iresearch.net](http://criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com/crime/domestic-violence/african-americans/), accessed August 25, 2019, <http://criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com/crime/domestic-violence/african-americans/>

informal adoption, or by appropriation; sustained by a history of common residence in America.”²⁶ The crisis in our ministry context is the failure to sustain marriages in the nuclear family. To be sure, Loraine Blackman asserts, “On average, married African Americans are wealthier, happier, and choose healthier behaviors than their unmarried peers, and their children typically fare better in life-differences that indeed seem to stem largely from marriage itself.”²⁷

Today the number of children born into a black marriage averages less than 0.9 children per marriage. “The birthrates of black married women have fallen so sharply that absent out-of-wedlock childbearing, the African American population would not only fail to reproduce itself, but would rapidly die off.”²⁸ During the days of slavery a black child was more likely to grow up living with both parents than he or she is today.²⁹ As recently as 1960, three-quarters of African Americans were born into a family of a married couple.³⁰ “Today only [one-third] of black children have two parents in the home.”³¹ What is the redemptive response to the threats against the African American family?

26. Andrew Billingsley, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African American Families* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 28.

27. Lorraine Blackman, Obie Clayton, Norval Glenn, Linda Malone-Colón and Alex Roberts, *The Consequences of Marriage for African Americans: A Comprehensive Literature Review* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2005), accessed August 25, 2019, http://americanvalues.org/catalog/pdfs/consequences_of_marriage.pdf.

28. Reynolds Forley, “After the Starting Line: Blacks and Women in an Uphill Pace,” *Demography* 25, no. 4 (November 1988): 487, Figure 6, quoted in Maggie Gallagher, *The Abolition of Marriage: How We Destroy Lasting Love* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1996), 120.

29. Andrew J. Cherlin, *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 110.

30. Christopher Jencks, “Is the American Underclass Growing,” in Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson, eds., *Urban Underclass* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1991), 86.

31. Dennis A. Ahlburg and Carol J. DeVita, “New Realities of the American Family,” *Population Bulletin* 47, no.2 (August 1992): 8.

The Crisis of Poverty – Debt

For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

—Matthew 25:42-45

The problems within the African American context are multidimensional. Yet at the core of these discrepancies is the cycle of poverty. Each and every indicator of African American disparity is exacerbated by or resulting in the economic deprivation of a people. I began this dialogue with the tragic narrative of two African American young men to whom I had the privilege and burden of ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One is now deceased and the other incarcerated for more than 30 years. Yet, they each symbolize a set of circumstances that outline the welfare of hundreds of thousands of African American men and women, circumstances that are clouded by the fog of poverty.

The first crisis mentioned was the failure of public education. The result is a pattern of increased economic marginalization for those Americans with the least education – estimated at an average lost income of \$400,000 between the ages of 18 and 64. Again, my deceased parishioner was a high school dropout with an infant daughter whose legal options for a living wage were few. Even today, as the body politic pleads for a rise in the minimum wage, there has been a decades long abandonment of working families who still live below the poverty line. Wealth inequality in a report by Oxfam indicates, “The incomes of the poorest 10% of people increased by less than \$3 a year between 1988 and 2011, while the incomes of the richest 1%

increased 182 times as much.”³² The distribution of wealth has never been more one-sided in the history of the world. “New estimates show that just eight men own the same wealth as the poorest half of the world.”³³

In 2016, approximately 40.6 million Americans lived in poverty, which is an improvement dating back to the year prior to America’s “great recession” of 2007.³⁴ According to the Pew Research Center, “The share of the U.S. poor population in *severe* poverty – defined by the Census Bureau as those with family or individual incomes below half of their poverty threshold – reached its highest point in at least 20 years. It was 45.6% in 2016, up from 39.5% in 1996.”³⁵ In light of this data, the condition of African American families continues to decline. *The Washington Post* reports that from 2000-2011, African American net worth dropped 37%.³⁶ Wealth disparities between African Americans and white Americans reveals the vastness of the poverty gap. Wealth among African Americans has decreased during the past 30 years, the disparity between the median African American families and white families increased by approximately \$115,000 according to *Fortune Magazine*. Furthermore, “By 2053, just 10 years after the country is projected to become majority non-white, black median families will own zero

32. Deborah Hardoon, “An Economy for the 99%,” Oxfam International (January 2017): 1, accessed August 25, 2019, https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-economy-for-99-percent-160117-en.pdf.

33. Hardoon, “An Economy for the 99%,” 2.

34. Kristen Bialik, “America’s deepest in poverty lost more ground in 2016,” Pew Research Center, October 6, 2017, accessed August 25, 2019, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/10/06/americans-deepest-in-poverty-lost-more-ground-in-2016/>.

35. Bialik, “America’s deepest in poverty.”

36. Carol Morello, “Net worth falls for majority as wealth grows,” *The Washington Post*, August 21, 2014, accessed August 25, 2019, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/net-worth-falls-for-majority-as-wealth-grows/2014/08/21/8cdfdf44-2951-11e4-8593-da634b334390_story.html.

wealth if current trends continue.”³⁷ Does the African American church have a redemptive responsibility to promote distributive ethics?

The Crisis of Cultural Identity – Dignity

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

—Psalm 139:14

The journey of the chosen people of Israel is the ideal place to ground a redemptive theological framework. Arthur Pink, in his book entitled *The Divine Covenants*, teaches us that the Bible is replete with numerous intergenerational promises intended to redeem God’s people. Pink declares of covenant relationships, “It is God granting a revelation of His institutions for redemption.”³⁸ Such is the case when God established the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12. The redemptive work of reconciliation between God and humanity became the burden of a solitary man, Abram. This covenant was highlighted with promises of property, prestige, prosperity and progeny beginning with one man; from one man to a family; from a family to 12 tribes; and from 12 tribes to a great nation. It is the onset of this redemptive narrative that gives rise to our redemptive expectation. Yet, despite the promise to Abraham, an issue arises regarding the illegitimacy of his first born, Ishmael, in light of the birth of Isaac, the chosen heir,

The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son mocking—the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. So she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son Isaac!” Now this was a very difficult thing for Abraham because of his son. But God said to Abraham, “Do not be concerned about the boy and your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will

37. Josh Hoxie, “Black and Latinos Will be Broke in a Few Decades,” *Fortune Magazine*, September 19, 2017, accessed August 25, 2019, <http://fortune.com/2017/09/19/racial-inequality-wealth-gap-america/>.

38. Arthur W. Pink, *Divine Covenants*, (Leeland, MI: Reformed Church Publications, 2015), 85.

be traced through Isaac. But I will also make a nation of the slave's son because he is your offspring." Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put them on Hagar's shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she said, "I can't bear to watch the boy die!" So as she sat nearby, she wept loudly. God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What's wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the boy from the place where he is. Get up, help the boy up, and support him, for I will make him a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the waterskin and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy, and he grew; he settled in the wilderness and became an archer. He settled in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.³⁹

Attentive Bible readers are aware of the legacy established through the bloodline of Isaac as his descendants remain the primary subjects of the biblical narrative. Only to a lesser degree has attention been given to the family fallout that casts Ishmael outside of the patriarchal jurisdiction of Abraham. Ishmael is the child of an extramarital indiscretion that emanated from Abraham's doubts about his potential for procreation with his wife Sarah. Sarah provides Hagar as the convenient surrogate to facilitate the progeny required by the Abrahamic Covenant. Ultimately, the lack of patience and faith in Abraham and Sarah results in the subsequent birth of Ishmael. The primacy of Ishmael is then displaced by the improbable birth of Isaac by an elderly Sarah.

What follows here is what scholar Lisa Zunshine calls a "cultural narrative of illegitimacy."⁴⁰ This notion of "illegitimacy" has been an ominous characteristic in African American culture. Scholars such as Jawanza Kunjufu and Alex Hailey have long held the belief that the African American people are the only immigrants in America who are by and large disconnected from a cultural history, language and land and most certainly not entirely embraced

39. Genesis 21:8-21.

40. Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth Century England* (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 2005), 36.

in America. It is this alienation proliferated by the Atlantic Slave Trade that displaced more than 6 million Africans which mislabeled the African American people as a historical accident of European colonialism and industrial greed. If the burden of racism and chattel slavery, the legacy of the 2/5th clause in the US constitution and many other inhumane public policies were not enough to label African American people as illegitimate, then racist biblical interpretation was certainly conclusive. Paul Rabouteau's preeminent work, *Slave Religion*, demonstrates biblical distortions like the curse of Ham and the decontextualization of scriptures like "slaves obey your master" from the Apostle Paul were utilized to establish a permanent caste system for African Americans.

Consequently, I associate many of the historical deficiencies outlined in chapter one to this cultural narrative of illegitimacy. Dr. Na'im Akbar calls this illegitimacy the "psychological chains of slavery." He suggests that the "influence of racial religious imagery on a people" has a causative effect on social behaviors.⁴¹ Therefore, given this context, the imagery of illegitimacy with regard to the demotion of Ishmael must be considered here. It is true that Ishmael is displaced by the preferred bloodline of Isaac. It is also true that Abraham is complicit in this demotion and the abandonment of his son, leaving him unprotected and alienated. The meager resources provided by Abraham were depleted and the mother Hagar had all but surrendered to their tragic fate. Fortunately, for those who minister in a "culture of illegitimacy" where a great majority of African American children experience absenteeism and estrangement from their fathers, the narrative does not end tragically. Their estrangement from Abraham did not leave

41. Na'im Akbar, *Breaking the Psychological Chains of Slavery* (Tallahassee: Mind Productions and Associates, 1996), vii.

them estranged from the God of Abraham. Out of their wailing there was an authentic religious experience or spiritual encounter that ensued in Genesis 21:17.

God responded to the voice of the child and dispatched an angel that provided immediate encouragement and direction. In the next verse (18), there is a reassurance that the covenant promise made to Abraham is still available to Ishmael: “I will make him [Ishmael] a great nation.” Despite his so called “illegitimacy” and despite being the seed of a consequential mistake, Ishmael is still an eligible heir of the Abrahamic covenant and verse 20 for the record declares without equivocation, “God was with the boy.” There is an authentic religious experience that finds expression through redemption in the value of Ishmael in the sight of our God, who continued to provide for him. It is important to make note that Ishmael’s promise was effectuated an entire generation before Isaac’s. We discover after the burial of Abraham that Ishmael already had 12 sons and one daughter in Genesis 25. It would take another generation under the leadership of Jacob/Israel before the foundation of the nation of Israel is birthed. Ishmael’s illegitimacy is the framework for how God redeems the disinherited. For this reason, the African American church must channel the role of the divinely charged angel who redeems Ishmael from that curse of illegitimacy.

A redemptive solution is also needed to address the growing concern of personal and collective dignity among African American millennials. Reared in an age of multi-media, social media and image centered reality television, there is a growing need to address the question of Christian dignity in contrast to the celebrated cultural images of the day. African American youth suffer from poor self-image or self-worth. Renford Reese defines it as a “culture of

underachievement” when the reality of African American males reverse rebellious images to define black masculinity.⁴²

In the 1940s, African American psychologists Drs. Kenneth & Mamie Clark, conducted the groundbreaking civil rights era doll tests indicating how segregation contributed to poor self-image and inferiority complex. The study was referenced in the Brown v. Board of Education decision that toppled separate but equal legislation. In 2010, Margaret Spencer recreated the test with similar results – lighter skin is valued more than darker skin.⁴³ Sixty years after Brown v. Board of Education – poor self-image continues to plague the African American experience. The context demands an African American, biblical response to its historical crisis. This project aims to equip the church to respond to these crises by sharing what one did to prevent mission creep within the Springfield Baptist Church.

42. Renford Reese, *American Paradox: Young Black Men* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2004), LOC 313, Kindle.

43. “White and black children biased toward lighter skin.” *CNN*, April 28, 2010, accessed August 31, 2019, http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2010/images/05/13/expanded_results_methods_cnn.pdf.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The Pew Research Center issued a revealing statistic in its 2014 Religious Landscape Study when they reported, “Today, a larger share of African Americans than whites say they are Christian.”¹ Furthermore, the Pew Research Center also concludes that black millennials continue to identify as more biblically engaged than the larger culture. They report, “In fact, nearly two-thirds (64%) of black Millennials are highly religious on a four-item scale of religious commitment – which includes belief in God and self-described importance of religion, in addition to prayer and worship attendance – compared with 39% of nonblack Millennials.”² Comparatively speaking, the African American church has a tremendous opportunity to model the transformative impact that redemption centered church can have on the world. Seemingly, according to the Pew Research Center, the African American church is the ideal institution to protect and promote the doctrinal integrity or purpose of the church.

Mark Labberton contends, “Beyond my own personal confession, my observations of other Christians and churches and the absence of any strong evidence to the contrary convinces me that the church is largely asleep – even if it doesn't look like it.”³ Labberton, among other

1. David Masci, Besheer Mohamed, and Gregory A. Smith, “Black Americans are more likely than overall public to be Christian, Protestant,” Pew Research Center, April 23, 2018, accessed August 26, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/23/black-americans-are-more-likely-than-overall-public-to-be-christian-protestant/>.

2. Jeff Diamant and Besheer Mohamed, “Black Millennials are more religious than other Millennials,” Pew Research Center, July 20, 2018, accessed August 26, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/20/black-millennials-are-more-religious-than-other-millennials/>.

3. Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God's Call to Justice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 15.

authors, has described a church that has grown dormant and stagnant with regard to its responsibility to address and advocate for social justice. The central intent of this project is to avoid the mission creep that renders the Christian church impotent and irrelevant to its cultural context. To borrow Labberton's metaphor, this thesis-project is one way to wake the sleeping giant of the African American church. Toward that end, I contend that the African American church should adopt the biblical principles and redemptive practices present at the church's foundation in Acts 2. The adoption of these pillars is one solution to mission creep within the postmodern African American church. In chapter two, I describe the theological foundations for this thesis-project that existed prior to the founding of the church and reveal the redemptive pillars of the church established during its founding in the Acts of the Apostles.

No church should establish its historical core values before declaring its biblical core beliefs. Without core beliefs that cohere with reciprocal core values, the contemporary church and more specifically the African American church will be incapable of fulfilling its redemptive potential. To the extent that the African American church has had a redemptive impact on the nation and world, it was based on fidelity with scripture. Likewise, doctrinal continuity was one of the greatest obstacles to the early Christian church. Heresy and false teaching were of paramount concern in many of the New Testament epistles such as Ephesians, 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, 1 John and Jude.

Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths.⁴

4. 2 Timothy 4:2-4.

The above scripture from Paul's second letter to Timothy asserts five imperatives intended to secure and preserve doctrinal integrity: "proclaim", "persist", "rebuke", "correct" and "encourage".⁵ The ministry of the Word must make proclamation, exegesis and obedience its highest priority according to the Apostle Paul.

And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit.⁶

The contemporary church must resist the temptation to "go viral" in ways that deviate from biblical instruction. It is this biblical instruction which enables the church to remain steadfast to its historical vision and expand our cultural foothold without sacrificing the church's redemptive utility and sustainability.

Unpacking the Pillars of the New Testament Church

Worship: Acts 2:1-11

The founding pillars of the New Testament church emerged out of a seemingly confusing cacophony of a religious experience. In the glossary, I defined a religious experience as a spiritual encounter where an individual or a group is confronted with divine truth, be it through liturgy, worship, preaching, Bible study, miracles or other natural and supernatural phenomena. The zeitgeist of spiritual transformation throughout biblical history has been the worship experience. From the tent of meeting in the wilderness, to David welcoming the Ark of the

5. Hayne Griffin, Jr. and Thomas Lea, *The New American Commentary*, vol. 34, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992).

6. Ephesians 4:11-14.

Covenant, to Solomon's dedication of the Temple to Pentecost, worship has been the foundation of community redemption. This worship experience in Acts chapter 2 has a distinct historical context that originates from the Old Testament tradition known as the Festival of Weeks. The Festival of Weeks or the Festival of Pentecost is one of three annual feasts wherein devout Jews are expected to pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁷ The Festival of Passover, commemorating the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, is widely known as it parallels the events of Christ's Passion Week narrative.⁸ The Festival of Booths, or Feast of Tabernacles, is a celebration of God's granting of shelter during the 40 years of wilderness wanderings.⁹ Before Pentecost became synonymous with pneumatological agency or the birth of the Christian church, the Feast of Pentecost was a celebration of agricultural achievement.¹⁰ Pentecost, meaning "fifty", was seven weeks and one day or fifty days following Passover. Israelite prosperity was dependent on livestock and agriculture, making their society historically susceptible to famine and crop infestation. Consequently, Pentecost was the celebration of the barley harvest and an opportunity to share first fruit offerings to the God who made their prosperity and subsistence possible.¹¹ As Pentecost is now known as the birthday of the Christian church, to extend this metaphor is to suggest that the womb of the church is the worship experience.

7. Exodus 34:23.

8. Exodus 12:1-51.

9. Leviticus 23:33-44.

10. Exodus 34:22.

11. Walter Elwell, ed., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 786.

Prior to the advent of the Holy Spirit, the remaining disciples of Jesus Christ “were all with one accord in one place.”¹² Augmented by the resurrection and subsequent forty days of random reappearances of Jesus the Christ, the disciples were urged to stay in Jerusalem until the promised manifestation of the aforementioned Paraclete.¹³ The ascension of Jesus was followed by ten days of obedience leading them to the 50th day, or the Day of Pentecost. The ascension is the beginning of Christ’s dominion of intercession and protection over the church and the moment when the profession of Christ’s authority begins in the church.¹⁴ The underpinnings of the church age are accomplished by Christ’s ascension, the obedience and unity of the disciples and the advent of the Holy Spirit. What follows is the dynamic activity of worship that underscores the foundation of the church as a witness to the Gospel. In chapter three, I will describe what scholars like Michael Horton, Mark Labberton, and N.T. Wright teach us about the centrality of worship in the Christian experience. They agree that worship at its core is a “covenant renewal experience” based on the “redemptive-historical model” of biblical interpretation.¹⁵ In other words, worship is where God’s plan for humanity is celebrated, anticipated and practiced. This is what transpires on the Day of Pentecost. It is the celebration of the current barley harvest that God already provided and the anticipation of the wheat harvest that God will provide. This is the “redemptive-historical model” – that the ongoing work of the church is on a continuum of redemption.

12. Acts 2:1.

13. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4.

14. Allen C. Myers, ed., *The Eerdmans’s Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 91.

15. Michael Horton, *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of God-Centered Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 81.

Acts 2:2-4 describes the activity of the Holy Spirit on the disciples that have faithfully awaited God's agency. The Holy Spirit falls as a fulfillment of Christ's promise and fills the room where the disciples are gathered on one accord. Christ promised that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit arrived.¹⁶ This word "power" utilized in Acts 1:8 originates from the Greek word "dunamai" which means "miraculous power, strength and ability."¹⁷ Upon filling the house, the text explains that the Holy Spirit fills the disciples. The manifestation of this new power is linguistic ability.¹⁸ The Holy Spirit empowers communication between nations, many of whom are historical rivals or enemies.¹⁹ The underlying principle of this thesis-project is that there is an expectation of tangible, redemptive implications that proceed from biblical worship. Labberton submits, "Biblical worship that finds God will also find a neighbor."²⁰ Christians never lose sight of neighbors as Jesus declares the greatest commandment, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"²¹ The Pentecost worship experience enabled a new international community to be forged with the possibility of continuity, communication, collaboration and cooperation. Mission creep occurs within the church when our worship abdicates any obligation to others. Beginning in Acts 2:5, what had been a spiritual phenomenon limited to one gathering place immediately developed into a public disturbance and spectacle.

16. Acts 1:8.

17. Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1981).

18. Acts 2:4.

19. Acts 2:9-11.

20. Labberton, *Dangerous Act Of Worship*, LOC 197, Kindle.

21. Luke 10:27.

This worship experience removed language barriers, enlarged their world and defined the scope of the disciples' care and concern.

Labberton continues in his description of biblical worship, "Scripture indicates that our personal and communal worship are meant to shape our vision and fire our engines to be daring disciples, imitating and sharing the love of Jesus Christ in acts of righteousness and justice."²² Concern and care for others, whether they are believers, is a recurring theme that punctuates the witness of the early church. This impetus is present in Acts 3 when Peter and John delay their entrance at the temple gate to minister to a physically disabled beggar.²³ Concern for neighbors was the principle at work when Philip overtook the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch enabling the Gospel to be received on the continent of Africa.²⁴ Concern for other people was how Lydia became the leader of the church at Philippi and how a suicidal prison guard was ultimately transformed along with his entire household.²⁵

Christian Education/Discipleship: Acts 2:12-36

The first pillar of the newly founded Christ-centered church established on the day of Pentecost was worship. The next pillar through which the church made its unique contribution to the redemptive-historical model of biblical interpretation was Christian Education. Christian Education is defined as biblical and extra-biblical instruction provided through curriculum, doctrine, training or preaching that promotes biblical principles and a biblical worldview with

22. Labberton, *Dangerous Act of Worship*, LOC 208, Kindle.

23. Acts 3:2.

24. Acts 8:27.

25. Acts 16:14; Acts 16:27.

particular attention to the principles and practices espoused by the historical narrative of Jesus Christ. After the disciples are “filled” with the Holy Spirit, they are immediately under observation by the general public. The result of these observations was a climate of bewilderment or confusion.²⁶ Ultimately, those who are not filled with the Holy Spirit dismiss this phenomenon as a case of public intoxication.²⁷ What follows is the Bible-centered sermonic presentation of the Apostle Peter to contextualize the dramatic events of that day and the fifty days that preceded it. The dramatic events contained in the first 13 verses of chapter 2 are then followed by 26 additional verses replete with biblical exposition.

Christian education is an antidote to cultural confusion. In providing a theological context for the dynamic activity of the Holy Spirit, Peter relied on scripture from the prophet Joel, the Gospel experience to which he is firsthand witness, and the Davidic psalms. Peter begins his exposition with cultural deconstruction. Warren Wiersbe suggests “No Jew would eat or drink anything before 9:00 AM on a Sabbath or feast day”, which makes the charge of public intoxication untenable.²⁸ Peter has a biblical explanation for the sensational events witnessed thus far, to include the manifestation of the Holy Spirit on people as they spoke in various languages. He turns to Joel 2:28-32,

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.

26. Acts 2:6.

27. Acts 2:13.

28. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: David C. Cook, 1992), 279.

Warren Wiersbe argues that Peter uses the reference of the minor prophet, not to declare its complete fulfillment of scripture which is intended to be carried out during the Parousia or second coming; the scripture reference is to describe the character and empowerment achieved by the Holy Spirit.²⁹ The pneumatological activity of Acts 2 is likened to the same anticipated activity in Joel 2. Other biblical scholars suggest that Peter uses this scripture to demonstrate how God “called upon the people to return with all their hearts, before the terrible day of the Lord came.”³⁰ Peter posits a God that is active and engaged in human history to accomplish the redemptive narrative. Several centuries had elapsed between the prophecy of Joel and the Holy Spirit’s appearance and occupation in Acts 2.³¹ And yet, biblical and prophetic fulfillment serves as the foundation of the church and the great expectation of divine providence. The church is both the partial fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel and the institution that will carry it to completion. God poured out the Holy Spirit and equipped the disciples to finish the work of the Gospel. Speaking to the Jewish members of his international audience, Peter speaks from a prophetic tradition that is indicative of a historical continuity that Joel predicted.³²

After demonstrating the connection between biblical prophecy and the movement of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:22-36 contains Peter’s effort to delineate the connection between the messianic expectation and the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Peter’s sermon focus introduces five arguments that prove that Jesus Christ is the risen messiah,

29. Wiersbe, *Expository Outlines*, 280.

30. Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 501.

31. Myers, *Eerdmans’ Bible Dictionary*, 721.

32. Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington’s Bible Handbook* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 637.

- (1) Christ's Person and life demand that he be raised from the dead (Acts 2:22-24).
- (2) Psalm 16:8-11 predicted the resurrection (Acts 2:25-31).
- (3) The apostles were witnesses and had seen the risen Christ (Acts 2:32).
- (4) The coming of the Spirit is proof Jesus is alive (Acts 2:33).
- (5) Psalm 110:1 promised his resurrection (Acts 2:33-35).³³

Warren Wiersbe describes Peter's sermon as both an indictment of the Jews for their role in the "rejection of Christ" yet it's also an invitation to acknowledge the lordship of Christ.³⁴ Peter insures that worship of the triune God, with all its possibilities and variations, must be Bible-based and Christ-centered in its proclamation. Christ is therefore the fulfillment of prophetic promise, the subject of messianic expectations and concurrently the foundation of the church. Peter and John would later declare that Christ "is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone."³⁵ New Testament scholar Howard Clark Kee affirms Wiersbe by identifying consistent patterns in New Testament preaching,

- (1) Jesus is from the posterity of David.
- (2) Jesus' ministry was approved by God, as may be inferred by the activity of the Holy Spirit.
- (3) The Jews put Jesus to death and, without realizing it, thus fulfilled the scriptures that point to his suffering.
- (4) Gentiles ought to recognize God's concern for them in that his divine provisions for their needs are everywhere apparent.
- (5) God has placed his stamp of approval on Jesus by raising him from the dead on the third day after his burial. Now God has exalted him and through him has sent the Holy Spirit.
- (6) All people are called to repent and to receive salvation through the name of Jesus, who is destined to be the judge of human kind.³⁶

Establishing the identity and authority of Jesus Christ is the distinct responsibility of the Christian church. It is the foundation of all doctrine and is the core belief to which all core values

³³ Wiersbe, *Expository Outlines*, 280.

³⁴ Acts 2:36.

³⁵ Acts 4:11 (Psalm 118:22).

³⁶ Howard Clark Kee, *Understanding the New Testament*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1983), 199.

must cohere. Today's Christian church would do well to ensure that these practices enumerated by Peter in Acts 2 and Wiersbe and Clark continue to be the core content of our preaching and our daily, weekly, monthly and annual Christian education programming.

Evangelism: Acts 2:37-41

Victoria Raymer's work emphasizes the time-honored teaching about worship as inclusive of "proclamation, encounter and response."³⁷ After biblical proclamation featuring the resurrected Christ and the spiritual encounter of the Holy Spirit, what remains of the worship experience is the "response" to the exposition of God's Word. The remaining four pillars of the church are "responses" to the proclamation and explanation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelism best describes this first response to the Christian narrative. In the Greek language, the verb "evangelize" means "to proclaim the good news or the Gospel."³⁸ The working definition of evangelism for purposes of this thesis-project is the activity of churches and individual believers that results in the reproduction of Christian disciples and the expansion of the Gospel's influence throughout the world. Biblical evangelism acknowledges that the greatest gift Christ's shed blood provides to humanity is the propitiation of sin.³⁹ "God's spirit," according to Howard Kee, "will be poured out on all flesh (on all humanity) and whoever (whether Jew or Gentile) will call on the Lord's name will be saved. The day of universal

37. Victoria Raymer, *The Bible in Worship: Proclamation, Encounter and Response* (London: SCM Press, 2018), 1.

38. Paul Achtemier, ed., *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 287.

39. 1 John 2:2.

salvation, or universal opportunity for salvation is here.”⁴⁰ Now the Great Commission can be accomplished by the agency of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the Gospel message.

In Acts 2:37-41, the adherents to the Gospel were compelled to respond to the revelation of Christ,

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The people received the Gospel from Peter and then sought the apostle’s direction about the appropriate response. Peter guided them to the point of a decision to live for Christ with the assurance that it will have an intergenerational impact for their families and children. Verse 39 explains that God is beckoning humanity to be reconciled to their creator. Luke-Acts historian Bob Utley contends, “God’s heart beats for a lost world made in His image, created for fellowship with Himself!”⁴¹ Day one, the day of Pentecost, was a strong day of evangelism as 3,000 people were added to the church. Evangelism was a daily activity.⁴² By Acts 4, the church had grown to 5,000 men.⁴³ Conversion and baptism are high priorities according to the Great Commission and are echoed throughout the Acts of the Apostles. Wilmington observes this emphasis saying, “Acts records several instances of believers being baptized following their

40. Kee, *Understanding the New Testament*, 187.

41. Bob Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts* (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 43.

42. Acts 2:47.

43. Acts 4:4.

conversion: the Samaritans (Acts 8:12), the Ethiopian (Acts 8:36), Saul (Acts 9:18), Cornelius (Acts 10:47-48), Lydia (Acts 16:15), the Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:33).”⁴⁴

In Acts 8, the Gospel was shared with the Ethiopian eunuch that facilitated Christian expansion into the interior of the African continent. As a result, the Christian church in Ethiopia became the official state religion in 330 CE, fifty years earlier than in the Roman Empire 380 CE.⁴⁵ Historian Alexander McCall contends that the act of evangelism in Acts 8 is the foundation of the African Christian church, “Ethiopian tradition maintains he returned home and evangelized the people.”⁴⁶ I affirm the conclusion of Warren Wiersbe that Acts 2 is not professing that salvation is based on baptism.⁴⁷ Everyone benefited from the community that was established by the initiation rites performed by John the Baptist, affirmed by the obedience of Jesus and set forth in the Great Commission.

Michael Green has dedicated more than 45 years toward the challenge of evangelism in the contemporary church. He suggests that the task has only grown more difficult with the emerging secularism of the postmodern age, “Relativism in morals and pluralism in belief are all part of the this newer worldview, which is hard to categorize precisely but has percolated very fast throughout society.”⁴⁸ The contemporary church has its work to do to reclaim evangelism, especially evangelism in America, as a high priority in the contemporary church. Green’s work

44. Wilmington, *Bible Handbook*, 635.

45. Alexander McCall, *History of Ethiopian Religion: Christianity of Different Denominations, Islam, Judaism*, Kindle Edition (Los Gatos, CA: Sonit Education Academy, 2016).

46. McCall, *History of Ethiopian Religion*, 3.

47. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Colorado Springs: David Cook Publishing, 2002).

48. Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Williams Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 12.

has been essential in the rise of evangelism in Africa, Latin America and many “two-thirds” world communities but not in America. The difference maker for Michael Green is that the early Christians possessed an uncommon “passion” and conviction about “the truth of the Gospel.”⁴⁹ The framework for this breakthrough already exists within the African American context with the resource known as the Lott Carey Global Christian Missional Community, a network of some 3,000 churches dedicated to the Christian witness. Dr. David Emmanuel Goatley’s work entitled *A Divine Assignment: The Missiology of Wendell Clay Somerville*, has preserved the theological foundations that make a rebirth of evangelism possible. Wendel Somerville, a former leader of the missional community operated on three principles: 1) Somerville as an advocate for the missional church. 2) Somerville’s notion that “every Christian is called to a missional life,” and 3) Somerville’s missional strategy for the world as “evangelical and holistic.”⁵⁰

Fellowship: Acts 2:42-47

Fellowship will refer to the communion that exists between Christ and Christ’s disciples as determined by doctrine “in duties; in ordinances; in grace, love, joy (2 Corinthians 8:4); mutual interest, spiritual and temporal (needs) (Romans 12:4,13; Hebrews 13:16); in sufferings (Romans 12:15); and in glory (Revelation 7:9).”⁵¹ Fellowship is what the disciples of Jesus Christ model as they journey for three and a half years under the tutelage of Jesus. Fellowship is founded on the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.⁵² The wisdom

49. Green, *Evangelism in the early Church*, 17.

50. David Emmanuel Goatley, *A Divine Assignment: The Missiology of Wendell Clay Somerville* (St. Louis: Lucas Park Books, 2010), 8-9.

51. M.G. Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (New York: Scriptura Press, 2015) LOC 13380, Kindle.

52. Philippians 3:10.

literature of the Old Testament speaks to the power of fellowship, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”⁵³ Christ promised his disciples, “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”⁵⁴ The Apostle Paul especially makes fellowship central to Christian life when he wrote, “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”⁵⁵ Several foundational moments in the Gospel and the early church were only achieved in the context of fellowship. The miracles of Christ, the communion with Christ, the revelation of Christ’s resurrection, Christ’s ascension and the visitation of Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost all took place in the context of fellowship.

For emphasis, two verses stand out in establishing the pillar of fellowship, Acts 2:42 and 46: “All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals [including the Lord’s Supper], and to prayer.” “They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.”⁵⁶ The early church inherently understood that spiritual growth, Christian growth and maximum Christian impact would be contingent on Christian fellowship. Henry Cloud, nationally renowned leader in Christian thought, strenuously suggests, “Biblical growth is designed to include other people as God’s instruments. To be truly biblical as well as truly effective, the growth process must include the Body of Christ. Without the Body, the process is neither totally biblical nor orthodox.”⁵⁷ Fellowship is the incubator for growth. What began in

53. Proverbs 27:17.

54. Matthew 18:20.

55. Galatians 6:2.

56. Acts 2:42, 46.

57. Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 122.

Acts 2 continued with Cornelius in Caesarea.⁵⁸ Additionally, it is demonstrated throughout the early church narrative as churches were founded in homes of women like Lydia at Philippi.⁵⁹

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit made communication possible between rival nations.⁶⁰ E. Henchmen contends, “Furthermore, the divine judgment at the Tower of Babel is reversed: Humankind, which was then divided by language barriers into many hostile peoples, is now brought into one by the power of the Spirit in order to prepare all to hear the one Gospel that can redeem the race.”⁶¹ Not only does the Holy Spirit address language barriers, the Spirit confronts barriers between genders and generations. When Peter quotes Joel 2, he speaks of gender inclusion in the church via the prophecy of sons and daughters. And secondly, Peter speaks of the intergenerational church as both the young and old will see visions.⁶²

William Sloane Coffin is hopeful that the church will be the advocate of inclusion. He envisions that American churches have a responsibility to foster fellowship that addresses the inherent evils of nationalism, ethnicity and racism. He states, “Human beings are fully human only when they find the universal in the particular, when they recognize that all people have more in common than they have in conflict, and that it is precisely when what they have in conflict seems overriding that what they have in common needs most to be affirmed. Human rights are more important than a politics of identity, and religious people should be notorious

58. Acts 10:24-27.

59. Acts 16:11-15.

60. Acts 2:6.

61. Ernst Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 166-175.

62. Acts 2:16.

boundary crossers.”⁶³ The Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost made “boundary crossing” and human affirmation possible among people of different languages, nationalities and ethnicities.

Peter affirms the intergenerational need of the Christian church. In the compelling work entitled *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*, the authors detail the unfortunate reality of an American church in decline. Every major denomination is challenged with decline and aging congregations. Yet, in the reprise to the Acts 2 sermon, young and old are intended to serve together. Paul urges Titus, “Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely.... These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God.”⁶⁴ The authors of *Growing Young* have developed case studies of contemporary evidence where the intergenerational church is gaining ground despite the gloomy statistics. They argue, “All around the country, these ‘bright spot’ congregations are effectively loving and serving young people.... They are growing – spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and sometimes also numerically.”⁶⁵ Fellowship facilitates this intergenerational imperative and accommodates growth.

When municipal leaders came together to discuss civic problems in the city of Denver, Colorado, the conclusion was that the city was in decline as result of distance and apathy among citizens. Christian leaders adopted the challenge to employ the “greatest commandment” in

63. William Sloane Coffin, *A Passion for the Possible: A Message to US Churches* (Lexington, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 7-8.

64. Titus 2:2, 4-5.

65. Brad Griffin, Jake Mulder, and Kara Powell, *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 18-19.

scripture: “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’”⁶⁶ Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon chronicle the challenges and transformational changes in their book *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door*. They write, “The story of God is told through the lives of people who collaborate and quite literally turn the world upside down. As we look back, we can see that God used these small groups of people literally to change the world.”⁶⁷ Transformation of our world is only possible when humanity connects with humanity. While so many of our community dysfunction and problems are perpetuated by people, Pathak and Runyon remind us that people are also the solution.

Stewardship: Acts 2:42-47

Stewardship shall be understood as the management of resources to include time, influence, property, wealth, talent and possessions with the expectation of accountability. Jesus taught his disciples to consider themselves recipients and managers of God-given gifts. Our responsibility according to Jesus is this, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”⁶⁸ Altruism is yet another appropriate response to the adoption of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Giving and generosity were necessary for the spread of the Gospel and the sustenance of

66. Matthew 22:37-40.

67. Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Doors* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 177-178.

68. Luke 12:48b.

Christian communities. The Apostle Paul uses his second letter to the church at Corinth to teach about the virtue of giving as he described the generosity provided by the Macedonian churches. Despite their poverty Paul declares, “For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.”⁶⁹ This is the same spirit of generosity that was on display on the Day of Pentecost. In Acts 2, “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”⁷⁰

Scholars insist that spontaneous generosity experienced on the Day of Pentecost is unique because it was “totally voluntary, temporary and motivated by love.”⁷¹ Other scholars conclude that the selling of possessions is evidence of a belief in a soon coming eschatology.⁷² The generosity of Acts 2 is duplicated in Acts 4,

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.⁷³

As Wiersbe acknowledges, the benevolence generated in the early church is a response to a sovereign God on display in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Benevolence is not demanded, coerced or manipulated. To believe in Christ is to embrace a lifestyle that gives.

69. 2 Corinthians 8:3-4.

70. Acts 2:44-45.

71. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 411.

72. John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983).

73. Acts 4:32-35.

The undergirding theological concepts that support this expression of generosity are numerous. A Christian church is a generous church. Todd McMichen underscores many of these beliefs in his work entitled *Leading a Generous Church: Making Disciples Without Chasing Money*. McMichen teaches the virtues of Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”⁷⁴ Christian stewardship begins with the notion that God owns everything. McMichen argues, “This book is not about tithing, but generosity.... My goal is to get you to release the ownership of your resources and grow towards a lifestyle of giving away far more than 10% of your income while influencing others to follow in your footsteps.”⁷⁵ The early disciples were not following a rule, mandatory minimums or a budgetary guideline for stewardship. Their resources all became subject to their believe in Christ and their assignment through the church. Jesus informed his disciples, “Where your heart is, there your treasure will be also.”⁷⁶ Acts 2 and 4 both indicate a primary motivation for the pooling of the disciple’s resources. In a phrase, the motivation for giving was to meet needs. It can be argued that church giving will be commensurate to the congregation’s ability to identify and meet needs within its congregation and the community. Scholars suggest that the needs are likely a result of lingering in Jerusalem beyond Pentecost or the loss of resources resulting from early Christian persecution. Paul expresses this empowerment where he declares, “At present time your surplus is available for their need, so their abundance may also become available for our need, so there may be equality.”⁷⁷ Paul likens the generosity of the early church to meet needs to the Mosaic

74. Psalm 24:1.

75. Todd McMichen, *Leading A Generous Church: Making Disciples Without Chasing Money*, 2nd ed. (Spring Hill, TN: Rainer Publishing, 2018), 30.

76. Matthew 6:21.

77. 2 Corinthians 8:14.

law.⁷⁸ Charles Swindoll speaks of this generosity and service as synonymous. He writes, “The Corinthians abounded in vision, spiritual gifts, knowledge and zeal, and even love. Paul then says to abound in generosity too. Be a giver! Be people who excel in unselfishness!”⁷⁹ The final pillar that we will unpack is the church’s embodiment and expression of the love of Christ, in Christian service.

Service: Acts 2:42-47

The final response to Peter’s preaching on the day of Pentecost is Christian service. Jesus again provides the foundation for this pillar of the church as he taught his disciples, “The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”⁸⁰ In describing his own contribution to the redemptive narrative, Jesus declared, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”⁸¹ Our working definition of service is the act of empowering people by equipping people in need and addressing and overcoming barriers that prevent human flourishing.”⁸² The scriptures indicate, “They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”⁸³ And in Acts 4, the disciples’ service was also evident, “And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.”⁸⁴

78. Hughes and Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*.

79. Charles Swindoll, *Improving Your Serve* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1981), 40.

80. Matthew 23:11-12.

81. Matthew 20:28.

82. Andy Crouch, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 54.

83. Acts 2:45.

84. Acts 4:33-34.

When thinking about great Christian servants, Mother Teresa of Calcutta comes to mind. Likewise, Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa deserves consideration. The man that many have declared the most influential person of the 20th Century was a product of the African American church. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wore many titles but the humblest was that of a servant. Noted King Scholar, Lewis Baldwin wrote a two-volume biography entitled *There Is A Balm in Gilead* and *To Make the Wounded Whole*. Baldwin uses these works to describe the influence of the African American church context in the emergence of the non-violent protest as an instrument of redemption and transformation. In his subsequent work, Baldwin attempts to describe the biblical origin of what is called “the capstone of King’s thought, the organizing principle of his thought and activity. It has been variously called the Christian eschatological ideal, the ideal corporate expression of the Christian faith and the mutually cooperative and voluntary venture of all mortal rational persons.”⁸⁵ King’s view of a cooperative community that eliminates needs originates in Acts 2.

Rendering redemptive service as the test of Christian authenticity is the purpose of this thesis-project. Scores of church practitioners and theologians share this testimony. Charles Swindoll in *Improving Your Serve* pronounces,

All the way through this book, I have stated and reaffirmed the same essential point: Since Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took upon Himself the role of a servant, so must we. The One who could have been or done anything, consciously and voluntarily chose to be one who served, one who gave. So then, if we are to become increasingly more like Christ (That is still our goal, isn’t it?) Then we, too, are to give and to serve.⁸⁶

85. Lewis Baldwin, *Toward the Beloved Community* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1995), 3.

86. Swindoll, *Improving Your Serve*, 222-223.

The Acts 2 church is the church from which all Christian churches are descended. It is the model church and these pillars are here to guide the contemporary church in its worship, Christian education, evangelism, fellowship, stewardship and service.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will explore what other authors, theologians and church historians have contributed to my analysis of the waning relevance of the contemporary church and what must be done to restore its efficacy. The readings will begin with theological underpinnings of ecclesiology and worship. After the consideration of core beliefs, we will explore what previous authors have argued with regard to the foundational pillars of the church. In conclusion, I will briefly interpret these applications for the African American context.

Core Beliefs – Ecclesiology and a Theology of Worship

Millard Erickson best describes the identity crisis that the contemporary church is enduring in his seminal work *Christian Theology*. He writes, “Much modern theology is less interested in the essence of the church, what it ‘really is’ or ‘ought to be’, than in its embodiment, what it concretely is or dynamically is becoming.”¹ The essence of this project emerges out the polarities described by Erickson. The biblical essence of the church or its deductive definition is likely to be in tension with the historical definition of the church that Erickson defines as “what the church is to be inductively from its engagement with what is – the condition of the world and the problems within it shape what the church is to be.”² The nature of this thesis-project is to bring harmony between the two definitions, namely the church at its

1. Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, second ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 1039.

2. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1039.

essence and the church that responds to the crisis of its context. The goal is to reclaim its biblical philological essence while also being responsive to its historical context. Erickson argues, “The new emphasis applying non-theological disciplines and methodologies to the study of the church poses a danger as the church struggles to understand itself theologically.”³ The postmodern church has begun to define itself dynamically rather than theologically or biblically. What happens when the church is defined methodologically in such a way that it abandons key components of its core beliefs?

In 2011, Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson issued a seminal study of church methodology and efficacy of the postmodern age entitled *Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth*. Among the largest and most expensive studies of its kind, Hawkins and Parkinson examined over 250,000 responses taken from members of more than 1,000 churches. Congregants were asked to identify their church’s effectiveness in stimulating spiritual growth based on a spiritual continuum, ranging from *exploring* Christ, *growing* in Christ, *close* to Christ and Christ-*centered*. Among the more substantial findings of the survey was the importance of biblical engagement. Hawkins insists that,

Nothing has a greater impact on spiritual growth than reflection on Scripture. If churches could do only one thing to help people at all levels of spiritual maturity grow in their relationship with Christ, their choice is clear. They would inspire, encourage, and equip their people to read the Bible—specifically, to reflect on Scripture for meaning in their lives. The numbers say most churches are missing the mark—because only one out of five congregants reflects on Scripture every day.⁴

3. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1040.

4. Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, *Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), LOC 215-236, Kindle.

In addition, the study identifies four key best practices that are common among the top 5% of the churches successful at developing spiritual formation among their membership. These best practices are as follows,

- 1). Clear Pathway of Development – “Best-practice churches promote and provide a high impact, nonnegotiable pathway of focused first steps.”⁵
- 2). Biblical Foundations – Every encounter and experience within the church begins with the question, “What does the Bible have to say about that?”⁶
- 3). Discipleship Identity – “Best practice churches embrace discipleship values as part of their identity.”⁷
- 4). Community Service – “Best practice churches act as its shepherd, becoming deeply involved in community issues.... They often partner with nonprofits and other churches to secure whatever resources are necessary to address the most pressing local concerns.”⁸

Hawkins and Parkinson’s study underscores the underachievement of many congregations who are investing in crowded church calendars and busy activities while missing the mark on biblical engagement and community involvement that frame the early church. Pastor Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Church asserts, “The disconnect between what we thought we were doing and what we were actually accomplishing was troubling and unacceptable.”⁹ It is this sentiment that this thesis-project is intended to eliminate within the African American

5. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, LOC 300, Kindle.

6. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, LOC 300, Kindle.

7. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, LOC 310, Kindle.

8. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, LOC 313, Kindle.

9. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, LOC 45, Kindle.

church context. Through the construction of targeted seminars, church leaders will understand the essence of the church as described by Erickson, to avoid the consequences of impotence and irrelevance that result from a lack of biblical engagement.

As we continue to explore what theologians have written on the subject of contemporary church reformation or recalibration, it is important to consider the role of contemporary worship models. N.T. Wright suggests, “You become like what you worship. When you gaze in awe, admiration, and wonder at something or someone, you begin to take on something of the character of the object of your worship.”¹⁰ If indeed Lincoln and Mamiya and Bill Hybels have discovered the missing elements of church efficacy, then we must seek to understand what we are intentionally or unintentionally communicating theologically when we gather to worship. Wright articulates a concern that I will demonstrate as a common issue among today’s church practitioners. He writes,

Because Christian worship is the celebratory praise and adoration of God the creator, one of its key tasks is to tell, in a thousand different ways, the story of creation and new creation. But if we try merely to celebrate creation the way it now is, concealing its flaws and horrors behind pious language, Christian worship can easily deteriorate and become trivial or sentimental. Wise Christian worship takes fully into account the fact that creation has gone horribly wrong, has been so corrupted and spoiled that a great fault line runs right down the middle of it—and down the middle of all of us, who, as image-bearing human beings, were meant to be taking care of it. That’s why Christian worship is also the glad celebration of God’s action in the past in Jesus the Messiah, and of the promise that what he accomplished in dying for our sins will be completed. In other words, as in Revelation 5, worship of God as redeemer, the lover and rescuer of the world, must always accompany and complete the worship of God as creator.¹¹

One dimensional worship has the potential to propel the contemporary church off course. Our worship must be inclusive of the tension that exists between what God has already done as

10. N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2006), 147, Kindle.

11. Wright, *Simply Christian*, 148, Kindle.

creator and the work that God is currently doing but has yet to complete as redeemer. This posture renders our worship both celebratory and anticipatory. Worship that excludes one or the other is rife with consequences.

Michael Horton's 2002 publication entitled *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of God-Centered Worship* addresses the tension between the dull routine of rehearsed worship and the loose theological footing of perpetual innovation. He declares, "The goal of this book...is to recover the sense of redemptive drama that we not only see illustrated in Scripture but that the Word and Spirit actually bring into our communal gathering."¹² The author argues that we must resist the notion of introducing our own "dramatic gimmicks" to God's worship. Like N.T. Wright, Horton defines worship as a celebration of God's activity in the earth posthaste. He calls it a "covenant renewal ceremony". Horton speaks of the consequences of ambiguous worship, "Vagueness about the object of our praise inevitably leads to making our own praise the object. Praise therefore becomes an end in itself, and we are caught up in our own 'worship experience' rather than in the God whose character and acts are the only proper focus."¹³ He continues, "What we do on the Lord's Day is already determined by God: preaching of the Word, the sacraments, and prayer (Acts 2:42)."¹⁴ For the spotlight of worship to venture in any other direction is by definition idolatry.

Horton further describes the theological underpinnings germane to a "better way" of worshipping or biblical worship. He endorses the redemptive-historical approach to exegesis that views Christ as the culmination of God's redemptive work for humanity. The redemptive

12. Michael Horton, *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of God-Centered Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 13.

13. Horton, *A Better Way*, 25.

14. Horton, *A Better Way*, 28.

historical approach interprets God's nature in light of God's activity in human history. Worship however is not only guided by what God has already accomplished but also by the component of God's will that has yet to unfold. Eschatology is that expectation of the finished work of God as defined by scripture and expressed in worship. N.T. Wright speaks of the tension between what God has done (creation) and what God will do (redemption). Horton examines how contrasting eschatologies have divergent implications for worship. Horton examines the gospel narrative to define what he calls the "already-not yet" eschatology. He writes, "Believers never live in either the already or the not yet by itself but always in that in-between world, moving back and forth between these two realities that mark our present travels."¹⁵ To define ourselves outside of this narrative presents an over-realized or under-realized eschatology.

Horton suggests that an over-realized eschatology is when "Christ's kingdom is entirely manifest, observable to the naked eye."¹⁶ He suggests that we no longer see ourselves as "pilgrims in a weary land" but as conquering and reigning and royalty on earth. Our ability to rule and reign is the clearest indication of the power of God at work. Any sign of weakness, sickness or vulnerability is then interpreted as an unacceptable narrative. It involves an immediate and quick expression of God's redeeming power. It is the over-realized eschatology that produces idolatry.

Horton suggests that an under-realized eschatology is when "the believer and the church generally are regarded neither as a pilgrim under the cross walking toward the promised land, nor as a conqueror in glory living in the Promised Land, but as defeated and awaiting escape from

15. Horton, *A Better Way*, 129.

16. Horton, *A Better Way*, 130.

the world altogether.”¹⁷ When our eschatology is under-realized we embrace a status quo, non-transformative expectation. There is no manifestation on futuristic hopes. Over-realized eschatology is synonymous with manifestation whereas under-realized eschatology is synonymous with survival which is certainly a theological vestige of African American enslavement. For Horton and for the sake of this study, the truth exists in the synergy between the already and the not yet,

It is not surprising in the light of the preceding that an over-realized eschatology will be triumphalist, while an under-realized eschatology will be defeatist or pessimistic. An already-not yet eschatology, at its best, will be humble and recognize that Christ is even now reigning in grace and therefore has already empowered the church to be his witness and yet that ‘the gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing’ (1 Cor 1:18). Because Christ has bound Satan and reigns in salvation, the gates of hell cannot prevail against the advance of his kingdom. And yet, because of the reality of sin and the blindness of fallen humanity, the orientation must be toward faithfulness (already–not yet) and not toward success (over-realized) or failure (under-realized).¹⁸

Only an “already–not yet” eschatology empowers and compels disciples to carry out the mandate of the Christian church. Horton argues that over-realized eschatology focuses on visible images but already–not yet eschatology focuses on faithfulness to the preached word.

Biblical worship must be centered on biblical preaching. As Millard Erickson, N.T. Wright, Hawkins and Parkinson and Michael Horton have emphatically established, the need for Bible-centered worship, preaching and leadership are essential to the church past, present and future. One of the most comprehensive homileticians of any age, Dr. Haddon Robinson, defines for us the goal and objective of preaching. He writes, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical,

17. Horton, *A Better Way*, 130.

18. Horton, *A Better Way*, 130.

grammatical, and literary study of the passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.”¹⁹

The purpose of the proposed seminar curriculum is to equip a generation of church leadership to provide a more biblical and relevant church that is responsive to the various crises that pervade the African American community. I hope to provide a curriculum that restores historical churches and provides a model for the establishment of new churches. This objective will only be possible when church leadership teams are unified in their efforts. Toward that end, in Matthew 16, Jesus gathered his disciples for a leadership summit in the pagan city of Caesarea Philippi. He asked the provocative question, “Who do they say that I am?”²⁰ A contemporary interpretation might be, who do the people who have no clue about scripture and no idea about historical context think that I am? As expected, the disciples’ answers varied from the laughable to the absurd: “Maybe John the Baptist, Elijah the prophet or Jeremiah.” One man was beheaded years before and two men had not been seen for several hundred years. The critical question was not the knowledge of the misguided masses; the relevant question was intended for the chosen leaders of the post-resurrection era who were being equipped during this pre-crucifixion period. Jesus asked his disciples, “What about you.... Who do you say that I am?”²¹ Peter answers with boldness and accuracy, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”²² Christ’s response is

19. Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), LOC 184, Kindle.

20. Matthew 16:13.

21. Matthew 16:15.

22. Matthew 16:16.

most revealing, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”²³ Jesus understands that the church’s survivability and viability is built on this foundational knowledge of knowing who Christ truly is. When church leadership is clear about the identity of Christ and our responsibility as his representatives, it provides the only foundation for advancement. Several authors address the need for leadership development and its application to the African American church context.

The Leadership Imperative

Simon Sinek is the author of *Starting with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. He writes, “This book is not designed to tell you what to do or how to do it. Its goal is not to give you a course of action. Its goal is to offer you the cause of action.”²⁴ Sinek’s book is not specifically addressed to the institution of the Christian church yet his observations are applicable to a leadership pivot needed to restore church relevance. Is it possible that the African American church has functioned with such routine and reaction to everyday realities that church leaders may have forgotten their “why”? Sinek argues, “Our behavior is affected by our assumptions or our perceived truths.”²⁵ In its basic form, the church is intended to be an organization that alters and manages human behavior. Church leaders are in the business of cultivating transformed lives. According to Sinek, we have two options, “You can manipulate it

23. Matthew 16:17-18.

24. Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009), LOC 146, Kindle.

25. Sinek, *Start with Why*, LOC 162, Kindle.

[human behavior] or you can inspire it.”²⁶ Again, Sinek is writing to a secular audience in the context of business and innovation. Manipulation has a track record of working and has become normalized in the world of business. The more rewarding option for altering human behavior is to inspire and motivate people.

Sinek argues that some of the greatest movements, initiatives and businesses emerged out of the inspiration generated by leaders who develop a following by connecting their customers, neighbors or parishioners to the “why” of their existence. He speaks of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement, President John F. Kennedy and the mission to put a man on the moon, the Wright Brothers who were first in flight and the Apple corporation. He states,

Very few people or companies can clearly articulate WHY they do WHAT they do. When I say WHY, I don’t mean to make money – that’s a result. By WHY I mean what is your purpose, cause or belief? WHY does your company exist? WHY do you get out of bed every morning? And WHY should anyone care?....People don’t buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it.²⁷

The application is clear for the African American Christian church. Underachieving churches begin with “what” or “how” while the greatest return on investment is reserved for leaders who collectively know the “why” of their church. This project will help the African American church uncover, preserve and practice its “why” by reclaiming a biblical identity and social relevance. And, as Sinek argues, this redemptive journey must begin with “inspired” church leadership.

Larry Osborne provides an autobiographical reflection of his own journey through church development and shares his experience and principles in the book *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page*. Unlike Sinek, Osbourne’s audience is specific to the contemporary Christian church. I include this work here because the plight of the African

26. Sinek, *Start with Why*, LOC 228, Kindle.

27. Sinek, *Start with Why*, LOC 541, 590, Kindle.

American church lies in the hands of its leadership and their ability to inspire younger generations to know and embrace the “why” of the church. Osborne gives us a glimpse of how important it is to develop the leaders around us. His desire is to foster unity within the church between three key components of a growing church: the board, the staff and the congregation.

Osborne insists that “unity is the one thing that can’t be left to chance.”²⁸ Osborne’s experience as a senior pastor of North Coast Church of California provides a framework for measuring and managing church unity: 1) Doctrinal Unity, 2) Respect and Friendship and 3) Philosophical Unity. By doctrinal unity, Osborne has simple statements of faith that establish core beliefs, “I mean agreement with our church’s statement of faith.”²⁹ These beliefs are the non-negotiables that all ministries establish to create the theological framework of the Christian church. We will establish core doctrinal beliefs in chapter four. The second component of church unity for Osborne is “respect and friendship” which are fellowship principles. For Osborne it means, “We must get along well enough to avoid the miscommunication, stereotyping, and personality conflicts that so easily get in the way when it’s time to tackle a tough or difficult issue.”³⁰ Finally, philosophical unity involves “having a basic agreement about our priorities and methods of ministry.”³¹ He calls it the more difficult task yet there is synergy between Sinek and Osborne in that they both begin with belief and inspiration, making unity a matter of inspiration rather than manipulation. While Osborne makes no attempt at establishing universal, concrete

28. Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), LOC 223, Kindle.

29. Osborne, *Sticky Team*, LOC 318, Kindle.

30. Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, LOC 342, Kindle.

31. Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, LOC 342. Kindle.

principles that are guaranteed to work in every church, he does channel the need to reassess what the church's responsibility is as defined in scripture. He articulates the mission of the Christian church with the simplicity of a Sunday School teacher, "To help people move along to spiritual maturity, to make sure that as a church we're fulfilling both halves of the Great Commission: leading people to Christ and nurturing them on to full obedience."³²

Leadership on the Line by Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky is a polemic on the treacherous reality of leadership. They warn of the hazards that accompany effective leadership. To be sure, the challenge of maximizing the potential within the African American church requires robust, systemic change. Many of my colleagues in pastoral ministry have suffered the turmoil that accompany attempts at church reform. Trust issues, leadership incompetence and the inability to innovate have stifled many African American congregations. These authors layout the minefield of leadership helping us to appreciate the different types of change. Heifetz and Linsky distinguish "technical problems" from "adaptive challenges". In the former, the people involved in the organization are asked or required to make small insignificant changes that do not require sacrifice. The latter, "adaptive challenges", requires everyone to give up something. The authors argue, "We call these adaptive challenges because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways—changing attitudes, values, and behaviors—people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment."³³ When adaptive change is required

32. Osbourne, *Sticky Teams*, LOC 294, Kindle.

33. Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 13.

to address an adaptive challenge the members of the organization are left with a sense of loss that can lead to dangerous consequences.

The endeavor to reform an organization or in this case a church through adaptive change will be met with opposition. According to Heifetz and Linsky the opposition will include distinctive forms such as marginalization, diversion, attacks and even seduction. These authors' work will be utilized to equip leaders to endure and overcome these dangerous pitfalls. Chapter four will help us to identify those places where adaptive challenges exist, and adaptive change is required. Surviving the dangerous reaction to leadership, according to the authors, involves the cultivation of a skill that they call "achieving a balcony perspective."³⁴ Effective leadership incorporates a platform for self-reflective evaluation. The authors argue that moving in and out of the role of participant and advisor provides us the opportunity to consider critical issues: "1. Distinguish technical from adaptive challenges. 2. Find out where people are at. 3. Listen to the song beneath the words. 4. Read the behavior of authority figures for clues."³⁵ Leaders are going to question our assumptions and exercise the discernment necessary to establish the reforms necessary for churches to thrive.

In *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential In Yourself and Your Organization*, Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey assert that the limitations of default technical leadership strategies must be replaced by the more productive work of adaptive leadership development. After thirty years of research, the authors argue, "True development is about transforming the operating system itself, not just increasing your fund of knowledge or

34. Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 53.

35. Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 55.

your behavioral repertoire.”³⁶ The leader who copes with the complexities of a new world, which is the task that stands before the contemporary African American church, must do more than add new tools to a proverbial tool box. Applying the collective wisdom of the authors, the development of “mental complexities” needed to engage a complex world continue to evolve with age in contrast to previously held notions. We have the capacity to embrace adaptive complexities well into our 70s as opposed to previously held notions that we peak around our 30s. This is good news for an African American church that depends on intergenerational engagement and exchange. For too long, African American churches suffered as leadership transitioned from one generation to the next, making resistance between the generations more formidable. These authors liken it to having one foot on the gas and the other foot on the brake. What do you do when the same system of commitments that have made you successful are the same system of commitments that are resistant to adaptive change? The metaphor of an immune system compels us to mine deeper into the obstructions that compel people who are sincerely committed to change yet fall short of making adaptive steps. Under the surface there are hidden commitments that serve as our true motivation for resisting technical change. Leaders are obliged to identify every motivation that consciously or unconsciously conditions behavior.

The immunity to change is “systems—even highly successful anxiety-management systems—at a cost. Inevitably, they create blind spots, prevent new learning, and constantly constrain action in some aspects of our living.”³⁷ The anxiety caused by change is managed by an immunity that while successfully protecting us from danger, in this case the dangers that

36. Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential In Yourself and Your Organization* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), LOC 301, Kindle.

37. Kegan and Lahey, *Immunity to Change*, LOC 906, Kindle.

accompany leadership, also prevents us from developing new skills. Change is not our problem, “Rather, it is change that leaves us feeling defenseless before the dangers we ‘know’ to be present that causes us anxiety.”³⁸ Immunity systems or anxiety management systems protect us from the dangers that lurk. However, there are unintended consequences. The authors state, “Our immune system has been giving us relief from anxiety while creating a false belief that many things are impossible for us to do — *things that in fact are completely possible for us to do!*”³⁹ The key to overcoming the immunity paradox that stifles an individual and an organization’s ability to reform and evolve is not to diminish immunity but to expand immunity. The authors challenge us to “reconceive the challenge to change” by enlarging the capacity of our anxiety management system.⁴⁰ This research and strategic approach will be fruitful as church leaders are challenged to embrace adaptive change. In chapter four, church leaders will consider the depth of change necessary to reclaim the biblical identity of the early church and the redemptive contribution to community advancement.

From Christian Worship to Christian Witness

This chapter began as an assessment of the object of postmodern worship and rightfully so. While worship has been clearly defined by the aforementioned literature, its consequences are more aptly defined by Mark Labberton in *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God’s Call to Justice*. Labberton asserts, “Worship turns out to be the dangerous act of waking up to God

38. Kegan and Lahey, *Immunity to Change*, LOC 931, Kindle.

39. Kegan and Lahey, *Immunity to Change*, LOC 931, Kindle.

40. Kegan and Lahey, *Immunity to Change*, LOC 963, Kindle.

and to the purposes of God in the world, and then living lives that actually show it.”⁴¹ Worship, for Labberton, is not confined to the pews of a posh sanctuary or the liturgy crammed into an order of service, worship “also includes how we treat those around us, how we spend our money, and how we care for the lost and the oppressed.”⁴² What restricts this most noble of connections between creator and created is the notion that “the church is asleep,” not dead but asleep. Labberton, a professor with pastoral experience, argues that “many of us are asleep to God’s heart for a world filled with injustice. It’s no surprise that we also seem to be asleep to God’s desire that out of worship should come a church that seeks and embodies the justice that’s needed in the world.”⁴³ This cannot happen until worship is shed from its idolatrous tendencies. We must resist the temptation to make worship of God all about us. Labberton cautions that worship oriented to God never justifies losing sight of our neighbor. The same crises that Lincoln and Mamiya articulate in 1990 is echoed in Labberton’s work as he writes, “The crisis the church currently faces is that our individual and corporate worship do not produce the fruit of justice and righteousness that God seeks.”⁴⁴

Labberton suggests that authentic worship compels us to critique and recalibrate our relationship to power. Labberton contends that “at the core of the Christian church is the recalibration of power, which was done at the cross and is remembered in our practices of worship.”⁴⁵ This is a critique that very few churches are willing to posit. Yet Labberton along

41. Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God’s Call to Justice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), LOC 103, Kindle.

42. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, LOC 103, Kindle.

43. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, LOC 113, Kindle.

44. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, LOC 203, Kindle.

45. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, LOC 1234, Kindl

with author David Platt of *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith From the American Dream* and Andy Crouch, author of *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* all take on capitalism, money, fame and influence as self-serving objects that tend to be abused even by devout believers. Labberton notes that “slavery was defended by many who knew Scripture backwards and forward—but their imaginations were unchanged.”⁴⁶ They were asleep. Yet what the church needs according to Labberton is to view itself as an instrument of justice engaged in the business of power redistribution. Gayraud Wilmore, the author of *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, suggests that the African American church might be the last American institution that is willing to critique the injustices of capitalism. Labberton warns us that reconsidering authentic worship awakens the worshipper to social injustice.

In contrast to the danger caused by transformational worship, David Platt warns of a greater danger. He writes, “And the danger now is that when we gather in our church buildings to sing and lift up our hands in worship, we may not actually be worshiping the Jesus of the Bible. Instead we may be worshiping ourselves.”⁴⁷ Being radical, for David Platt, means taking a deeper look at the object of our worship, “We are afraid that if we stop and really look at God in his Word, we might discover that he evokes greater awe and demands deeper worship than we are ready to give him.”⁴⁸

46. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, LOC 1714, Kindle.

47. David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2010), 12, Kindle.

48. Platt, *Radical*, 28, Kindle.

Andy Crouch's book is not exclusively a critique of capitalism as much as it is on the abuse of power. In his own words, "Power is the ability to make something of the world."⁴⁹ For Crouch, power is a gift from God that was established at creation for the purposes of establishing and sustaining human flourishing. He posits, "Why is power a gift? Because power is for flourishing. When power is used well, people and the whole cosmos come more alive to what they were meant to be. And flourishing is the test of power."⁵⁰ Crouch defines power as the ability to make meaning of the world. Conversely, powerlessness is being cut-off from participating in that process. Crouch continues, "Perhaps they were denied this by being cut off from education, the process by which human beings gain the cultural fluency to participate in culture's ultimate task of meaning making."⁵¹ He further argues, "When any human being lives in entrenched powerlessness, all of us are impoverished."⁵² The African American church has work to do as we minister to historical and systemically powerless people. We are compelled by the object of our worship to engender a community where power is applied for human flourishing. The African American church continues to this day to be the greatest reservoir of power within African American communities. As the church flourishes so should the community. Yet, misguided theology and misplaced priorities plague our greatest hope for redemptive ministry. Crouch provides us a road map when he writes, "I have come to believe, though, that the only way to understand power's abuse is to begin with its proper use."⁵³ Crouch

49. Andy Crouch, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 16.

50. Crouch, *Playing God*, 14.

51. Crouch, *Playing God*, 17.

52. Crouch, *Playing God*, 18.

53. Crouch, *Playing God*, 37.

turns toward the application of power at creation in Genesis 1 and 2. For the sake of this thesis-project, we will examine the proper usage of the power of Christ's church on the day of its inception.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

I have established the importance of biblically rooted and socially relevant churches. I have proven that socially relevant churches are achieved when their biblical roots are operative in the activity or work of the church. I have demonstrated the need for leadership development in the previous chapter that provides current church leaders the tools necessary to restore the church's reason for existence. Chapter four of this thesis-project contains a curriculum for a six-seminar lesson plan intended to equip the African American Church in its response to the problems and deficiencies of its context.

I have adopted the use of seminars as a didactic tool most specifically for its proven record of student-teacher engagement. Church leaders generally have an extensive lived experience and yet there are many unchallenged embedded theologies and ideologies. The seminars are intended to identify these beliefs and to help leaders confront theologies and practices that are either useful or detrimental to the church. The seminar format seeks to bring together small groups for recurring meetings, each with a particular subject focus that builds upon the other. The instructor encourages participants to engage in discussion through a combination of written and visual materials, interactive tools and demonstrations. Lingling Qu and Min Kuang are professors in the School of Economics and Management at Leshan Normal University, Leshan, China. Professor Kuang lauds the "New Seminar" instruction model by saying, "The connotation of 'New Seminar' is to use the teaching idea of research interaction, but it breaks through the way of topic discussion or special debate which is often used in the past

education, and uses a new method of teaching guidance which combines vivid teaching with research learning.”¹ The results and conclusions of these seminars will be individualized and tailored for the variables of each context as it relates to the demographics, economic and political realities of each ministry setting. Colleague to Kuang and Qu is Wang Qing who affirms this approach, “‘Individualized teaching’ should be a kind of teaching design which is based on students’ active participation, supported by the concept of ‘group-oriented, giving consideration to differences,’ and based on flexible teaching organization and multiple teaching strategies, so that all students can obtain full and harmonious development.”² In short, the seminars are designed with the participants in mind—whom these seminars designed to engage.

The six-seminar curriculum is designed for leaders within host congregations who consistently look to scripture for direction in leading and advancing the church. These individuals will be identified by pastors, bishops or senior church leadership who have demonstrated a constructive hope for the local church to maximize its redemptive potential. Without creating anxiety or inundating participants with theological jargon, each participant will only be distinguished by their desire to see their own church be more effective at ministering to its larger community. Depending on the size and structure of each individual congregation, the seminars should include both clergy and laity, paid staff, non-paid ministry leaders, board members, worship leaders, Christian education teachers, trustees, stewards and deacons. The seminars are designed for independent instructors, clergy or laity, that are unaffiliated with the host church but are publicly sanctioned by the senior pastor or bishop. This approach is intended

1. Lingling Qu and Min Kuang, “Construction Strategies of School-Based Individualized Teaching Actions Under the Visual of New Seminar,” *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 233 (July 2018): 250, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://dx.doi.org/10.2991/iccessh-18.2018.53>.

2. Qu and Kuang, “Construction Strategies,” 251; Wang Qing, “Research on the Action of Individualized Teaching in the Context of Large Classes” (diss., Yangzhou University, 2013), 10.

to create a non-judgmental and less intimidating environment for the free exchange of assumptions and ideas. For this reason, it is suggested that seminars be no more than 20 people within a 90-minute time frame.

Prior to each seminar, the participant will answer questions that will be critical to group discussion for the subsequent meeting. The questions will be listed under the “Overview/Description” section of each seminar. The appendices contain several resources that can be used with each seminar.

Seminar One: Why the Church?

Objective: Seminar participants will differentiate between the church that Christ intended in scripture (Matthew 16:13-19) and the contemporary African American church in its current iteration.

Overview/Description: In order to advance the African American church, this seminar will agree with the assertion made by Lincoln and Mamiya in *The African American Church in the Black Experience* published in 1990 and Dr. Eddie Glaude who assert that the African American church has underachieved since its inception and civil rights era contributions. In addition, to the extent that the African American church at large may have lost its way, the seminar will build a consensus on why the church was established. Simon Sinek’s work *Start with Why* will challenge these leaders in that transformation, recognizing that success is best achieved when people are connected to the “why” of an organization. Participants will clearly articulate answers to the following questions: What is the institutional “why” of the Christian church? How has the purpose of Christian church been altered in the function of the local

church? Is today's church activity reflective of the dynamic work expected from its insemination?

To achieve the objective, this seminar will examine when Jesus first adopts the language of the "ecclesia" in the Gospel narrative found in Matthew 16:13-19. It is here where Jesus, the cornerstone of the church, lays the foundation for this institution. We will assert that what Christ says about the church is substantive and the final authority. We will assert that the teachings of Christ began with questions and likewise we will begin this journey to church realignment with biblical principles and questions: Who, Why, Where, What, and How. The "Who" has been predetermined. The "Who" in the text are the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ who are being equipped to provide leadership for the emergence of the church. The "Who" of this moment of instruction are the seminar participants that have been predetermined by the senior pastor or bishop.

The "Where" of the text is a pagan cultural center called Caesarea Philippi. It's a Roman city of trade and economic prosperity but also a religious system of polytheism and debauchery. Caesarea Philippi represents the gentile world that is the mission field of the church. Today's Caesarea Philippi is the secular world described ideologically in Pauline language as the wisdom of the world.³ It is the world in the postmodern age that has grown hostile to a biblical world view. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons describe secularization as "something – a backlash against religion's worst sins, a political climate that wants to stamp out religion in public life, the popular rise of atheism, amplified access to polarizing points of view, something is making it

3. 1 Corinthians 3:19.

increasingly difficult to practice faith in our society.”⁴ The contemporary era has its peculiar challenges. However, these foundational moments for the Christian church were in many ways more formidable. Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”⁵ If indeed Jesus is asking who the world says he is, there is certainly no consensus among the gentiles of Caesarea Philippi.

I assert that Jesus’ first query is simply a backdrop to his second. He asks his disciples, “Who do you say I am?”⁶ As it pertains to the identity of Jesus the Christ, “the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” the ignorance of Caesarea Philippi is unmistakable.⁷ However, should disciples or church leaders express any confusion about the identity of Christ, this would be unacceptable. Fortunately, for the church’s sake, Peter answers this question correctly as we can never expect the world to experience Christ if the disciples have yet to experience Christ. The objective of this first seminar is to clarify that the church’s greatest single responsibility is to represent and present Christ to the world.

Preparation for Seminar One

Ask participants to read Matthew 16:13-20 and to answer the following question: Why does the church exist? Utilize the corresponding slide presentation contained in the Appendix F of this thesis-project as a guideline for the lesson plan.

4. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Things You’re Irrelevant and Extreme* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 11.

5. Matthew 16:13.

6. Matthew 16:15.

7. Matthew 16:16.

Lesson Plan

1. Introduction: Who are the disciples (Matthew 16:13)? (10-15 minutes)

This session will begin with a time of introductions. Each selected church leader will state his or her name, ministry, and tenure of leadership. Participants will express why they were selected to participate. Take note of the perceived understanding of their participation. At the conclusion of the introductions, all participants will be asked to view themselves as disciples of Jesus Christ walking through the town of Caesarea Philippi.

2. The Place: Where are the disciples (Matthew 16:13)? (15 minutes)

The seminar leader will provide the demographic and geographic location of the historic city of Caesarea Philippi. A PowerPoint presentation is available to support the instruction; see Appendix F. The greater application of this discussion is that Caesarea Philippi represents the current cultural backdrop of ministry. It's a Roman province, an economic center with the population density equivalent to a modern-day urban center. The seminar facilitator will invite participants to draw connections between the secular world of Caesarea Philippi and their current ministry context, to consider the obstacles of ministry in a secular place like Caesarea Philippi, and to create a list of similarities to the obstacles of ministering in their contemporary context. (perversion, biblical illiteracy, corruption, etc.)

3. The Purpose: Starting with Why (20 minutes)

The participants will be informed about concepts and examples outlined by Simon Sinek's *Start with Why*. They will be instructed that change is inspired and not manipulated. The purpose of this seminar series is to encourage churches to reclaim their *raison d'être*.

4. The Plan: Matthew 16:13-15 (20 minutes)

Jesus asks two questions in the scripture; the second question will be the basis for the discussion – Who do the disciples say that I am? Jesus and the church cannot afford a leadership team that is clueless about the identity of Jesus Christ or the purpose of his church.

5. Concluding Dialogue (20 minutes)

What does it mean to be the “rock” of the church? What things in your opinion have emerged that may be competing with Christ as the center of the church? How well does your church represent and present Christ to its community? What should the church be doing to more accurately represent Christ? Why? Participants will be informed that when Peter proclaimed the “why” of the church, it then qualified him to participate in the establishment of “what” the church does in Acts 2.

Seminar Two: What is the Church? Worship & Fellowship Pillars

Objective: Seminar participants will learn the important alignment between substantive worship and witness. The “what” of the church intentionally begins and emerges from the context of a God-centered corporate worship experience.

Overview/Description: Worship services are the most frequent activities of Christian churches and rightfully so. The church was established during a worship service. Again, N.T. Wright defines worship as “the celebratory praise and adoration of God the creator, one of its key tasks is to tell in a thousand different ways, the story of creation and new creation.”⁸ Worship involves telling and retelling the story of God’s redemption of humanity by the sacrifice

8. N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (New York: Harper Collins E-books, 2006), 148.

of Jesus Christ. As we build on the “why” of the church that we rediscovered in Seminar One, Seminar Two seeks to ensure that Christian worship keeps God as its object. We will rediscover the reverence required for authentic worship and consider some of the obstacles that seek to compete with God as the center of worship. The need to clarify the purpose and meaning of worship is critical in that routine tends to subvert that clarity. Wright asserts two golden rules about worship that will be taught in this seminar. These rules are, “You become what you worship” and “worship makes you more truly human.”⁹

Michael Horton warns us about the perils of idolatry. He warns us about what happens when “how we worship is simply a matter of style, not substance.”¹⁰ Seminar participants will be challenged to make the worshipper subject to God who is the object of our worship. When we make worship market-driven or “seeker friendly” we run the risk of losing the object of our worship. Yet and still, humanity as Wright and Horton suggest have a constructive role to play in worship. Wright says worship compels us to embrace our humanity. Horton agrees, “When God’s people understand who God is, who they are in his presence, and what is happening to them when they come into his presence, not only their minds but their hearts are transformed.”¹¹ In this way, we become what we worship.

Finally, we will explore the power of corporate worship and being on “one accord”. Worship is an exercise in fellowship as the Bible establishes, “Where two or three gather in my

9. Wright, *Simply Christian*, 147.

10. Michael Horton, *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of God-Centered Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 11.

11. Horton, *A Better Way*, 13.

name, there I am with them.”¹² We will see on multiple occasions how intergenerational, gender inclusive fellowship is a core component of the early church experience.

Preparation for Seminar

Each participant will read Psalm 124 and Acts 2:1-21; Acts 2:42; 46. Utilize the corresponding slide presentation contained in Appendix G of this thesis-project as a guideline for the lesson plan. Consider the question, what are the components of a substantive worship service?

Lesson Plan

1. Definitions of Worship (20 minutes)

The lesson will begin with Horton and Wright’s definitions of worship. We will discuss the object and the subject of the worship service. We will also discuss the definition of idolatry and the impact of idolatry on the worshipper.

2. Old Testament – Model of Worship (20 minutes)

We will study Psalm 124 and the model of worship that it promotes. The preparation and precision that the Israelites brought to worship is precisely the discipline that we seek to reclaim within the contemporary context. We will examine the role and result of fellowship in their worship.

12. Matthew 18:20.

3. New Testament – Model of Worship (20 minutes)

If indeed worship is a celebration of creation and a platform for new creation, we are now able to understand what happened on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The Holy Spirit transforms a traditional practice into a new dynamic expression of the power of God. We will examine the role of and result of fellowship in their worship. In a world where brick and mortar churches are giving way to “a new gathering of believers” in the virtual world of streaming and digital engagement, African American church leaders are compelled to adjust to new surroundings.¹³

4. Concluding Dialogue (30 minutes)

Administer the following quiz to the seminar participants. Their answers will be compared to the answers of 100 pastors surveyed during the construction of this thesis-project: see Appendix C and D.

1. My church is intentional about conducting regular seasonal and annual fellowship-centered events that promote intergenerational interaction? A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know
2. Our worship regularly incorporates opportunities for intergenerational participation (nursery, children's church, teen church, young adults and seniors). A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know
3. My church features recreational ministries, fitness groups and team sports offerings for church membership. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know
4. My church encourages membership interaction through digital means such as social media and live streaming. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know.
5. Our church professes the connection between believing (faith) and belonging (fellowship). A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

13. Douglas Estes, *SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), LOC 168, Kindle.

6. How often does your church offer the sacraments (Baptism & the Lord's Supper)?
A. 1-4 per year B. 5-10 per year C. 11-15 per year D. As needed. E. I Don't Know

Concluding Consideration

Imagine how functional or dysfunctional church would be without God centered worship.

Seminar Three: What is the Church? Christian Education Pillar

Objective: Seminar participants will be challenged to understand the need for an effective Christian education program which is necessary for equipping disciples for ministry.

Overview/Description: When Jesus called his disciples to be the leaders of the new dispensation that would be the Christian church, he immediately began to teach them.¹⁴ This seminar is designed to establish the significance of Christian education within the church. Jesus' first public appearance after his circumcision in Luke chapter 2, was as a twelve-year-old child with great authority in the temple; he possessed "understanding and answers."¹⁵ On the day of Pentecost when the church was established, the Holy Spirit descended as promised and people with language barriers were now able to talk to each other. The move of God and the fulfillment of divine promise was met with confusion. The unenlightened surmised that the people who were activated by the Holy Spirit were likely inebriated.¹⁶ The answer to confusion was biblical teaching and sermon exposition led by Peter.

14. Mark 1:21.

15. Luke 2:47.

16. Acts 2:13.

The Bible teaches, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”¹⁷ We have established that biblical engagement is the best practice to inspire spiritual formation. A recent LifeWay Research study found “only 45 percent of those who regularly attend church read the Bible more than once a week. Over 40 percent of the people attending read their Bible occasionally, maybe once or twice a month. Almost 1 in 5 churchgoers say they *never* read the Bible.”¹⁸ LifeWay Research found that “while 67 percent of Americans believe heaven is a real place, 45 percent believe there are many ways to get there—including 1 in 5 evangelical Christians. More than half of evangelicals (59 percent) believe the Holy Spirit is a force and not a personal being—in contrast to the orthodox biblical teaching of the Trinity being three Persons in one God.”¹⁹ Seminar participants will measure the impact of biblical illiteracy especially within their own church.

Preparation for Seminar Three

Each participant will Read Acts 2:14-41. Utilize the corresponding slide presentation contained in Appendix H of this thesis-project as a guideline for the lesson plan.

17. Proverbs 4:7.

18. Ed Stetzer, “The Epidemic of Bible Illiteracy in Our Churches,” *Christianity Today*, July 6, 2015, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/july/epidemic-of-bible-illiteracy-in-our-churches.html>.

19. Stetzer, “The Epidemic of Bible Illiteracy in Our Churches.”

Lesson Plan

Introduction: The Problem of Biblical Illiteracy (30 minutes)

The seminar participants will begin this lesson by acknowledging the current data on biblical illiteracy. The urgency of biblical illiteracy challenges the central tenant of the faith. There is evidence to suggest that “many within the church do not believe in resurrection.”²⁰

The Purpose of Biblical Instruction (30 minutes)

The seminar participants will explore the relationship between biblical core beliefs and church core values.

Concluding Discussion (30 minutes)

Administer the following quiz to the seminar participants. Their answers will be compared to the answers of 100 pastors surveyed during the construction of this thesis-project: see Appendix C and D.

1. My church’s Christian Education department provides practical theology for practicing Christians. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don’t Know
2. My church’s Christian Education department provides education for at least 4 generations. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don’t Know
3. Christian Education participation is a clear expectation for the entire church. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don’t Know
4. Christian Education participation is expected and enforced for church leadership. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don’t Know

20. Michelle Vu, “Poll: Most Americans Reject Resurrection of the Body,” *The Christian Post*, April 13, 2006, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/poll-most-americans-reject-resurrection-of-the-body-7879/>.

5. My church has a well-defined, strategic Christian Education statement of purpose, slogan or scripture. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know
6. My church's Christian Education department addresses the crisis of biblical illiteracy. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

Concluding Consideration

Imagine how functional or dysfunctional church would be without Christian education.

Seminar Four: What is the Church? Evangelism & Stewardship Pillar

Objective: Seminar participants will articulate the significance of evangelism and stewardship as pillars of the Christian church.

Overview/Description: According to many historians, the church was founded in the year 33 AD and will have endured for approximately 1,987 years by Pentecost Sunday 2020 (May 31, 2020). While there is much to celebrate, the Christian church is trending in an unfortunate way. According to many studies, the Christian church in America is suffering from 6,000 church closings annually.²¹ Churches close because of a failure to reproduce from generation to generation. The longevity of every biological creature depends on its ability to reproduce. The church as the Body of Christ also depends on the reproduction of believers and disciples.

Seminar participants will consider the gravity of Christ's final command and expectation as articulated in the Great Commission.²² They will be asked to distinguish church promotion from making disciples. Current statistics from The Lott Carey Foundation will be reviewed regarding the inactivity of American evangelism.

21. Captain Cassidy, "Wait, How Many Churches Close Per Year?" Patheos, November 29, 2018, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rolltobelieve/2018/11/29/how-many-churches-close-per-year/>.

22. Matthew 28:18-20.

Seminar four will have a secondary focus to include stewardship. According to the Michigan Chronicle, congregants contribute “\$12-13 billion annually to African American churches” making it by far the wealthiest institution within the African American community.²³ The survivability of the African American church will largely be decided by both evangelism and stewardship efforts. According to analysts at Prosperity Now and the Institute for Policy Studies, income inequality and financial mismanagement will result in African American households having a zero net worth by the year 2053.²⁴ As the most stable institution of our communities, the African American church should be at the center of wealth management.

Preparation for Seminar

Participants will read Acts 2:44-47. Utilize the corresponding slide presentation in Appendix I of this thesis-project as a guideline for the lesson plan.

Lesson Plan

1. Introduction to Evangelism (35 minutes)

After examining the urgency for stewardship development, seminar participants will consider the urgency of regeneration through evangelism in an ever-growing secular world. There will be an emphasis on transforming new believers into givers in the African American church. We will explore the legacy of Lott Carey and the history of Christian evangelism in the book of Acts.

2. Introduction to Stewardship (25 minutes)

23. John Tucker, “What is the Black Church’s Role in Advancing African American Wealth?” Black Enterprise, November 28, 2017, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.blackenterprise.com/does-the-black-church-matter/>.

24. Erik Sherman, “Median Wealth of Black and Latino Families Could Hit Zero by the End of the Century,” *Forbes*, September 11, 2017, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/eriksherman/2017/09/11/median-wealth-of-black-and-latino-families-could-hit-zero-before-the-centurys-end/#f19fd350f6a1>.

Seminar participants will discuss the reality that the survivability of the African American church is connected to the strength and wealth of the African American family. Participants will explore the responsibility of being the wealthiest institution within a community with such a gloomy economic outlook.

3. Concluding Discussions (30 minutes)

Administer the following quiz to the seminar participants. Their answers will be compared to the answers of 100 pastors surveyed during the construction of this thesis-project: see Appendix C and D.

Evangelism

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements as it reflects your church's approach to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

1. My church has an evangelism team that shares Christ with the general public.

- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

2. My church offers Christian Education courses about Biblical models of evangelism and contemporary approaches.

- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

3. My church has seasonal evangelism challenges for the entire membership.

- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

4. My church discourages evangelism that places individuals at personal risk.

- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

5. My church places an intentional emphasis on evangelism to different ethnic groups beyond African Americans.

- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

6. Our church is comfortable with its current size and is disinterested in evangelism.
 A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
 E. I Don't Know
7. Our church resists the commitment necessary to expand services or build new facilities to accommodate growth.
 A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
 E. I Don't Know
8. What percentage of your church's new members are new converts to Christianity?
 A. Less than 10% B. Less than 25% C. Approximately 50% D. More than 50%
9. How many baptisms does your church conduct annually?
 A. 0-15 B. 16-35 C. 36-50 D. 51-100 E. 100+

Stewardship

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's approach to stewardship/giving. (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

1. Giving expectations are clearly defined with Biblical support and pastoral appeals.
 A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
 E. I Don't Know
2. Christian Education classes provide doctrinal support to giving expectations and personal financial management.
 A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
 E. I Don't Know
3. Capital improvements (roofing, plumbing, electrical, etc.) are addressed as emergencies with special appeals/offering as needed.
 A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
 E. I Don't Know
4. Our church has created a climate of transparency and anti-fraud financial management including regular meetings, audits and reviews.
 A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
 E. I Don't Know
5. The church invests in digital platforms for giving via the internet, website, text-to-give, etc.
 A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
 E. I Don't Know

6. Our church promotes special giving opportunities for scholarships, building funds, debt reduction, etc.

- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

7. Stewardship is taught as more than financial management but time, talent and asset management as well.

- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

8. After mortgage/rent and payroll obligations, which category represents the next greatest budgetary allocation? (Select One)

- A. Worship & Multimedia B. Capital Improvements C. Christian Education
D. Construction. E. Program Events F. Administration G. Missions/Benevolence

9. Which church budgetary line items have decreased within the last 3 years? (Select All That Apply)

- A. Missions/Benevolence B. Payroll C. Christian Education
D. Capital Improvements E. Transportation F. Civic Contributions/Scholarships
G. Program Events H. Building Fund G. Worship & Multimedia

Concluding Consideration

Imagine how functional or dysfunctional church would be without evangelism and stewardship.

Seminar Five: What is the Church? Service Pillar

Objective: The emblematic impact of the Christian church is its legacy of service.

Seminar participants will discuss the current ability of Christian churches to meet the needs of the congregation and the community.

Overview/Description: Mark Labberton declares that one the greatest gifts of biblical worship is “the realignment of power.”²⁵ Those who align with the compassion of the triune God of scripture are compelled to confront the injustices that litter the cultural landscape. The church is not called to endorse the majority culture norm; the church’s responsibility as a response to

25. Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God’s Call to Justice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), LOC 1213, Kindle.

worship is to promote justice by addressing the places where systemic abuse of power is pervasive. This seminar will address the imperative to serve humanity. On the day that the church was birthed in the Acts of the Apostles, “They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”²⁶ This was a direct response to the teaching of Christ and God-centered worship. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”²⁷ Participants will consider Christ’s proclivity to minister to the disinherited or more accurately “the least of these.” In comparison, participants will examine the injustices of the African American context as outlined in chapter one of this thesis-project. Participants will review best practices related to the contemporary church’s response to the injustice, crises, exploitation and poverty within their context. Seminar participants will wrestle with the relevant question that Lincoln and Mamiya established nearly 30 years ago about the waning relevance of the African American church. Seminar participants will debate the declaration of Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr. who announced that the Black Church as we know it is dead, “the idea of this venerable institution as central to black life and as a repository for the social and moral conscience of the nation has all but disappeared.”²⁸

Preparation for Seminar

Each participant will Read Acts 2:44-45. Utilize the corresponding slide presentation in Appendix J of this thesis-project as guideline for the lesson plan.

26. Acts 2:45.

27. Mark 9:35.

28. Eddie Glaude, Jr., “The Black Church Is Dead,” *Huffington Post*, April 26, 2010, last updated August 23, 2012, accessed August 29, 2019, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/eddie-glaude-jr-phd/the-black-church-is-dead_b_473815.html.

Lesson Plan

Introduction: Searching the Scriptures for the Centrality of Service (25 minutes)

Seminar participants will be engaged biblically about the responsibility of service rendered by disciples.

Exploring the Needs of the African American Church Context (45 minutes)

As outlined in chapter one of this thesis-project, seminar participants will address the problems within the African American context. These problems include: The Crisis of Education – Dropouts; The Crisis of Mass Incarceration – Detention & the War on Drugs; The Crisis of Health – Disease & Drugs; The Crisis of Low Life Expectancy – Death & Family Violence; The Crisis of Family – Divorce; The Crisis of Poverty – Debt; The Crisis of Cultural Identity – Dignity.

Concluding Discussion (20 Minutes)

Administer the following quiz to the seminar participants. Their answers will be compared to the answers of 100 pastors surveyed during the construction of this thesis-project: see Appendix C and D.

Service

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's approach to outreach and community service? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

1. My church believes in and seeks to responsibly implement the Tithing-The-Tithe principle (10% of church budget is provided to community service, benevolence, missions and other projects). A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know
2. My church routinely provides church wide service project opportunities.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree

E. I Don't Know

3. My church collaborates with other churches and para-church organizations to broaden its capacity to serve. A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

4. My church seldom if ever engages in service projects that do not originate from church leadership or membership.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

5. My church intentionally celebrates and promotes our service project accomplishments.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

6. My church is known throughout the community for making significant contributions to service projects.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

7. My church works to diminish the impact of poverty.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree
E. I Don't Know

8. As a service delivery agency in the African American community, which areas of service does your church contribute to directly? (Select All That Apply)
A. Food Distribution B. Scholarships. C. Healthcare/Medicine/Health Education
D. Funeral Assistance E. Mentoring. F. Senior Housing/Services
H. Public School Partnerships I. Community Watch. J. Narcotics/Alcohol Anonymous
K. Prison Ministry L. Foreign Missions M. Human Trafficking/Sex Industry
N. Refugee Assistance O. Homelessness/Affordable Housing
P. Pastoral Care/Spiritual Direction Others: _____

9. What approximate percentage of your church membership directly contributes to or participates in service projects and initiatives?
A. Zero B. Under 10% C. 10%-25% D. 26%-50% E. 51% or more
F. No service projects

Concluding Consideration

Imagine how functional or dysfunctional the church would be without service to its larger community? What factors may contribute to a reduction of community service?

Seminar Six: How Will This Church Make A Difference?

Objective: The final seminar will engage participants on their road map to church relevance as we commit to making a redemptive contribution to our communities. The leadership team will be charged with the responsibility of developing core values for the church that will guide ministry emphasis for the foreseeable future.

Overview/Description: What difference will this church make? This final seminar will seek to create a defining statement about the purpose of the local African American church. What is the specific assignment of this local church, given its history, gifts and competencies in conjunction with its biblical core beliefs. We will develop a set of core values that solidifies the purpose and praxis of the church for generations to come as the church rapidly approaches the 2,000th anniversary (2033) of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and the subsequent birth of the church in Acts 2. Can we recapture the institutional integrity that the New Testament Church exhibited on its first day?

Preparation for Seminar

Each participant will receive examples of core value statements. Utilize the corresponding slide presentation in Appendix K and three pastoral interviews with best practice pastors contained in Appendix B of this thesis-project as a guideline for the lesson plan.

Lesson Plan

Introduction: Why Core Values (20 minutes)

Seminar participants will be reminded of the importance of “starting with why” and the question raised by Christ to his disciples during Seminar one. “Who do you say that I am?”

Reviewing examples of core values statements (25 minutes)

Seminar participants will review 3-5 core value statements and collectively determine which pillar of the church each statement represents.

Constructing the Church’s Redemptive Core Values (45 minutes)

Seminar participants will incorporate the church pillars of Christian Education, Worship, Fellowship, Evangelism, Stewardship and Service into a draft of their own church core values. This collective statement will be revised and presented to the senior pastor for review and considered for incorporation into the cultural identity of the church for decades to come.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In chapters one and four, I highlighted the stinging critique of the African American church by authors Lincoln and Mamiya. Their questioning of church relevance and a possible theological shift is also present in the work of E. Franklin Frazier and others. Furthermore, the sentiment is explicit in the language of Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr., Professor of Religion and Chair of the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University when he pronounced the death of the historical African American church: “But such a church loses its power. Memory becomes its currency. Its soul withers from neglect. The result is all too often church services and liturgies that entertain, but lack a spirit that transforms, and preachers who deign for followers instead of fellow travelers in God.”¹ He argues that the African American church has traditionally held a conservative view of social engagement and more than ever is competing with other institutions as the central voice of an ever growing heterogeneous community. However, as devastating as this critique is, Dr. Glaude concludes his thesis with a statement of hope for the redemption of the African American church,

The death of the black church as we have known it occasions an opportunity to breathe new life into what it means to be black and Christian. Black churches and preachers must find their prophetic voices in this momentous present. And in doing so, black churches will rise again and insist that we all assert ourselves on the national stage not as sycophants to a glorious past, but as witnesses to the ongoing revelation of God’s love in the here and now as we work on behalf of those who suffer most.²

1. Eddie Glaude, Jr., “The Black Church Is Dead,” *Huffington Post*, last revised August 23, 2012, accessed August 25, 2019, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/eddie-glaude-jr-phd/the-black-church-is-dead_b_473815.html.

2. Glaude, “The Black Church Is Dead.”

I write this thesis-project as a potential model of church praxis that contributes to the socioeconomic progress of the larger African American community. These seminars are not a quick fix to the challenges that face the African American church or the community context, but its impact holds tremendous long-term potential. This final chapter is the evaluation of how one church, the Springfield Baptist Church of Conyers, Georgia, has sought to employ biblical integrity and community relevance in the postmodern age.

Personal History: Disclosure of Bias

These six seminars are proposed as a tool to “breathe new life” into this all-important institution. I am currently a 48-year-old third generation pastor, completing my 20th year of pastoring at the same church. My grandfather was a pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) which was founded by Bishop Richard Allen in 1794 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, giving African Americans one of their first institutional foundations in colonial American history. My father has recently completed his 45th year as pastor of the same Baptist church in McDonough, Georgia. He leads a historic congregation that dates to 1869 and is in its 150th year of existence. Likewise, I pastor a church that was founded 10 years later in 1879 and is in its 140th year of existence. We lead churches where historical reflection and preservation are a part of the competencies necessary to lead. Needless to say, I am motivated to provide a tool that enables success among churches who minister to the African American context.

In the interest of full disclosure, I am also a third-generation college graduate from a historically black institution, a rarity in the 20th century American backdrop. My father and grandfather both graduated from the AME school, Morris Brown College, 40 years apart, 1929 and 1969 respectively. I matriculated at Morehouse College and graduated in 1993. African

American institutional integrity is important to our work. Both Morehouse and Morris Brown have well documented pathways to theological education and strong reputations for producing competent leadership in the African American church. Admittedly, there is a vocational thrust to affirm these institutions that affects my objectivity. Yet, it is this same bias that also informs my hope and optimism with regard to the capacity of the church to undergo a redemptive transformation. In addition, the preservation of the church consumes an even greater dimension of my subjective concern as my father's tenure draws to a close and succession plans are being implemented for that 150-year-old congregation. The continuity of the African American church like any other organization will be contingent on leadership succession where values are already predetermined. I am hopeful that this approach to biblical compliance and communal relevance will both preserve and advance churches like these that have been essential to my own spiritual formation and my children. Admittedly, I come to this task with a sense of institutional obligation.

The intention of this thesis-project is ultimately to inspire and produce advancement within the African American context. I do not claim or infer that biblically aligned churches will eliminate dropouts, detention, disease, drugs, death, divorce, debt and the dignity issues that I have outlined earlier. However, I do affirm that these six seminars provide churches with a common redemptive language to reduce mission creep from our biblical imperative and redeem community deficiencies throughout the aforementioned indices. In so doing, the seminars enable leaders to evaluate how they understand the identity and responsibility of the church. These seminars will assess the relevance of the local church in meeting the needs of its community context. At the conclusion of the seminars, church leaders will be challenged to think strategically about the institutional purpose and possibilities of their church's comprehensive

service to their community. This task will be accomplished by the review of core beliefs and the establishment of core values that will serve as guardrails for church ministry now and in the future.

To be clear, the thesis-project is constructed with the expectation of both short-term objectives and long-term impact. The short-term progress will be evaluated by the process of consensus building among church leaders about the “raison d’être” of the local church. This impact will be measured in the leadership’s ability to think theologically about the activity of their ministry and their commitment to biblical principles. In his book entitled *Becoming A Thinking Christian*, John Cobb argues that disciples cannot abdicate the responsibility of thinking about God to clergy or professional theologians. Cobb empowers individual believers to see themselves as theologians in hopes of building consensus about the God we proclaim and serve. Cobb introduces a teaching methodology to review the ideas of others and puts people in conversation with each other. He writes, “But no amount of learning about the ideas of others takes the place of thinking for yourself, and the general stimulus of enchanting new ideas usually does not go far toward making you think carefully and critically.”³ The survival of the African American church and its effectiveness to engage in redemptive ministry is what’s at stake. Like our national indifference to the adverse warning signs of global warming, we ignore the signs of church decay at our own risk.

Springfield Baptist Church History

Church history is an important element of these seminars. The history of the Springfield Baptist Church (SBC), like every Christian congregation, finds its origin in the year 33 A.D. by

3. John Cobb, *Becoming A Thinking Christian: If We Want Church Renewal, We Will Have to Renew Thinking in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 8.

the events recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The seminars enabled Springfield to recognize its beginning prior to the year of its founding, 1879. All church history finds its origin within the biblical narrative as an authentic extension of the New Testament church which supersedes any ethnic or denominational identity. Acts 2 is the first chapter in all local church history. Connection to the New Testament church is important, providing a common context for the contemporary church. The relationship of the New Testament church and the local church plays a vital role in establishing core values. That being said, Springfield was founded during the turbulent post-civil war period in American History when Union occupation of the former Confederate states had come to an abrupt end through a political compromise known largely as the “Great Betrayal”. This compromise abandoned federal reconstruction policies after 1876. When federal troops were withdrawn from Confederate states, African Americans lost protection for voting rights, public safety, education and other basic human rights as southern leaders sought to restore old south traditions and ideology.⁴ Against the backdrop of this formidable struggle, former slaves who did not flee the southern region began to establish churches. Springfield was founded by Reverend Joe Sims and served as the spiritual tabernacle for former slaves and sharecroppers of Newton & Rockdale counties in Georgia.

By 1896, SBC was an established congregation and active participant in the historic Yellow River Missionary Baptist Association for African Americans. For the greater part of a century, the Yellow River Missionary Baptist Association was the premier regional convocation for African American churches throughout the eastern metropolitan Atlanta area. Springfield provided leadership and facilitated various conventions and training sessions. From its founding, SBC promoted collaboration and fellowship for community advancement. Springfield forged

4. Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, Paul D. Escott, et. al., *A People & A Nation: A History of the United States*, vol. 2, *Since 1865*, third ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 462-463.

relationships and advanced the church under stable pastoral leadership evidenced by their extensive tenures. Though founded in 1879, Springfield has only had nine pastors/interim pastors (listed in chronological order): (1) Founding Pastor Joe Sims; (2) Rev. R.B. Carr; (3) Rev. A.O. Robinson; (4) Rev. Rutledge; (5) Rev. T.D. Dorsey; (6) Rev. James Brown; (7) Rev. A.L. Weaver, (8) Rev. C.H. Glover; (9) Pastor Eric W. Lee, Sr.

Springfield's first known facility was built in the early 1900s. The wood frame building was a primary resource for Newton County and Rockdale County residents and eventually served as a segregated public school for African American children. The school served children from primary school through eighth grade in the one room schoolhouse until 1951. SBC saw numerical growth throughout its history. With the installation of the current pastor, Springfield grew from 162 members to over 500 by January of 2000. In May of 2002, the Springfield Christian Academy opened to provide childcare services for preschool. By 2010 during the residency of this doctoral program, Springfield had acquired more than 70 acres of property for future construction and was worshipping in a 49,000 square foot facility with more than 5,000 members.

From 2012-2013, Springfield relocated to its permanent location at 1873-1877 Iris Drive with the acquisition of four buildings. The 43-acre parcel contains four buildings totaling more than 155,000 square feet. Springfield literally sits on some of the most recognizable real estate in the center of the community along Interstate 20. SBC completed the real estate transaction to acquire the campus on December 18, 2013. The \$12 million purchase required \$2.5 million to be delivered at the closing. By that time, Springfield had amassed 115 acres of property with a membership of more than 7,000 people.

With acquisition nearing its completion, I recognized that the church was about to pivot from more than a decade of property acquisition, planning for construction and capital stewardship campaigns. The church was corporately focused on the tangible need for space and accommodating growth. Our acquisition-focused ministry would need a realignment that addressed our operation and occupation once our mortgage loan was secured. The future of the church would depend greatly on the direction provided by the pastor, the board, the staff and leadership team after the more than decade-long pursuit of a new facility was complete. Having completed my coursework for the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell, I sought to implement the redemptive curriculum of leadership development at Springfield. In April of 2013, the six seminars were implemented to help Springfield avoid mission creep and to give a common language and definitive direction for all church activity moving forward. We sought to honor our history of collaboration and service to our context.

Seminar Results: Core Beliefs of Springfield Circa 2013

What follows are the core beliefs that were revised and affirmed as a result of seminars in 2013. The doctrine is foundational to the core values of Springfield and reflects a contemporary recitation of the 18 Articles of Faith published in the New National Baptist Hymnal.

Triune God: God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. God is infinitely perfect and eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. (*Genesis 1:1,26,27; 3:22, Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all humanity by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate God's power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory where He is now our High Priest and Advocate. Christ will come a second time to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (*Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-5, Hebrews 4:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Romans 1:3-4, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Timothy 6:14-15, Titus 2:13, Philippians 2:5-11*)

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make humanity aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every believer from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living. He convicts men of sin, regenerates the believing sinner, indwells, instructs, gives understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily. (*2 Corinthians 3:17, John 16:7-13; 14:16-17, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16, Ephesians 1:13, Galatians 5:25, Ephesians 5:18*)

Humankind: Humanity is made in the image of God. Humanity is the supreme object of God's creation. Although God designed humanity to have fellowship with God, humanity became alienated from God through disobedience. As a result, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and choose to sin against God. Humanity is incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through our own efforts. (*Genesis 1:27, Psalm 8:3-6, Isaiah 53:6a, Romans 3:23, Colossians 1:21, Isaiah 59:1-2*)

Salvation: The shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God. Salvation is a gift from God to humanity. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can humanity be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. (*Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 14:6; 1:12, Titus 3:5, Galatians 3:26, Romans 5:1*)

Eternal Security: Because God gives man eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives this security. (*John 10:29, 2 Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 7:25; 10:10-14, 1 Peter 1:3-5*)

The Bible: The Bible, the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God without error in the original writings, and are the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of humanity and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Timothy 1:13, Psalm 119:105,160, Psalm 12:6, Proverbs 30:5*)

Eternity: Man was created to exist forever. He will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God, through forgiveness and salvation. There will be a bodily resurrection of all the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, and of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment. (*John 3:16, 1 John 2:25; 5:11-13, Romans 6:23, Revelation 20:15, Revelation 21:1-7*)

The Church: The true Church is composed of all such persons, who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the head. (*Acts 2:42-47, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:11-16*)

Sacraments of Baptism & Communion: Water Baptism by immersion soon after accepting Christ as personal Savior is a testimony of death to sin and resurrection to a new life. The Lord's Supper is a memorial service setting forth in sacred and symbolic

manner the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; all true believers and only believers should share in it. (*Matthew 3:13-17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Sanctification: We believe that an authentic Christian life is one that excels through spiritual maturity and development of each individual, family and the church at large. We believe that Sanctification is a progressive work by which we are made partakers of God's holiness through the means of Christian Education, Fellowship, Discipleship, Evangelism, Stewardship and Service. (*Ephesians 3:17-19, Ephesians 4:11-16*)⁵

Seminar Results: Core Values of Springfield Baptist Church Circa 2013

Throughout Springfield's extensive church history, the word "growth" continued to emerge as a central theme. In 2013, the church embraced the acronym G.R.O.W.T.H. as a celebration of its history and direction for its future. Springfield asserts its core values and alignment with the biblical pillars of the church contained in Acts 2 with the following language: Growing through God's Word (Christian Education); Reconnecting Generations through Fellowship & Worship (Fellowship & Worship); Operating in our Spiritual Gifts (Discipleship); Winning the Community (Evangelism); Tithing in Love and Obedience to our God (Stewardship); and Helping to Empower the World (Service).

For the past five years, Springfield has been intentional about making G.R.O.W.T.H. the foundation and premise of all church activities. It has been incorporated into the church logo. All our church ministries are divided into the categories of Christian Education, Fellowship, Worship & Arts, and Service. G.R.O.W.T.H. is at the root of all planning and budgeting. It is explicitly written into every job description and is the basis for semi-annual and annual performance reviews. G.R.O.W.T.H. is the rubric and format that governs our annual year-end reporting to the church at large. The core values have been the impetus for leadership training

5. *New National Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: R.H. Boyd Company, 1977), 606-609.

and personal development. Our Christian Education department has now been reestablished as G.R.O.W.T.H. University with Ephesians 4:11-16 as its mission,

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

The focus of Christian Education is to engage membership biblically, to foster a relevant biblical worldview, and to produce lifelong learners who always have another level of development to achieve. Lastly, SBC partnered with the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) to allow laity and current ministers to engage in continuing education and obtain a Certificate of Ministry.

Springfield is intentional about celebrating international diversity with more than 35 nations represented in the church membership. Intergenerational diversity and gender inclusion is also celebrated at Springfield. The Springfield Board of Directors is now led by a chairwoman, millennial leadership, and has a total of three women among a board of seven members.

G.R.O.W.T.H has also helped Springfield to prioritize when hiring staff. We have added full-time directors of Music Worship & Arts, G.R.O.W.T.H. University, Children's pastors, Youth Pastor, Fellowship Pastor and a part-time Outreach Pastor to constitute our Ministry Cabinet.

G.R.O.W.T.H. governs the annual calendar and is instructive as we determine which activities and initiatives are incorporated or rejected. Springfield now has more than 10,000 members and among our greatest accomplishment of the past 5 years is baptizing and equipping 152 candidates for baptism on one Sunday. The core values enable the church to communicate the character of our existence at the first impression. Springfield has also enjoyed its most

prosperous years in giving during this timeframe because of Bible-based, non-manipulative stewardship teaching.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to the implementation of core values has been the litany of ways that we have been able to serve our community. Nursing home ministry, back to school supplies, food pantry, prison ministry and homeless ministry were all initiatives that Springfield conducted prior to 2013. Since the implementation of core values, the outreach ministries of Springfield have expanded to a monthly food pantry, active school participation, a mentoring program, a transitional prison ministry, scholarship programs, anti sex trafficking training, domestic violence awareness, mothers against drunk driving, ongoing substance abuse meetings, mental health awareness initiatives, grief share and robust charitable giving to other churches and para-church organizations. Springfield has been able to respond to various natural disasters such as hurricanes and man-made disasters like the water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

Seminar Evaluations

Springfield has had the benefit of five years of core value implementation, matching mission with their methodology of ministry. The intrinsic value of these seminars is demonstrated in the evaluation of the core value process as produced in accordance with Gordon-Conwell IRB standards (see Appendix E for seminar evaluation tool and responses). The assessment was administered digitally and answers were given anonymously. Twelve of our participants who were either board members, staff members or leadership team members responded to questionnaires. Only one staff member was unavailable after having passed away in the fall of 2013. Fortunately, Springfield has enjoyed consistency among the board and staff over the past five years which might also be attributed to the success of this seminar. The following is

a summary of how the seminars were successful in moving the church forward with a biblical foundation while responding to community needs.

The initial question was, “What conditions do you recall made it necessary for the pastor and leadership team to develop core values in the Spring of 2013?” Effort was made to ensure that everyone knew the purpose of the seminars before they commenced. It was discussed in board meetings, staff meetings and leadership meetings and what follows are responses that reflect that cohesive understanding. The common thread among all twelve responses was the challenge of quantitative growth, clarity of identity and communicating with the same language. Among the responses are,

- (1) We were in a period of exponential growth and one of the challenges was remaining central to who we were as a church. An identity crisis of sorts and the core values were developed to effectively communicate who we were.
- (2) We were experiencing rapid change within ministry, particularly after the move to the new church location. God was calling us to expand our outreach to new territories to respond to the needs of the church and surrounding community.
- (3) In order to be responsive to the identified Mission and Vision of Springfield Baptist Church, it was necessary to identify the core values as a definition of who we are as an organization to ourselves and others. Community involvement and relevance to the multiple generations present in the congregation drove this need to identify who we are.

These responses undergird the fact that “starting with why” must begin before the initial seminar. The second question was related to the first regarding motive and rationale. It read, “As part of the leadership team, what was the rationale used in creating the core values in 2013?” The appreciable answers were both biblical and collaborative. In order for the church to advance, the rationale needed to be biblical in its origin. Our respondents recall the validation that biblical foundation provided to the process.

- (1) I remember when the passage of scripture was quoted from Pastor. Jesus asks His disciples ‘who do “you” say that I am?’ was one of the primary inspirations for us developing core values in order to identify who we are as a church.
- (2) We used the same model that was established in the creation of the church in Acts 2.
- (3) Our Senior Pastor Eric W. Lee didn’t operate in isolation but rather invited leadership to partake in the creation of the SBC Core Values.

Springfield was already growing exponentially but the growth motivated us to step back and clarify who we are and who we were becoming. Our quantitative growth was impressive to many, but we understood biblically that the sustainability of the numeric growth by producing disciples would be achieved by the quality of our ministry moving forward. We liked quantitative growth, but we valued quality most and were willing to sacrifice the former for the latter.

Respondents were asked, “Since the adoption of the core values in 2013, what has been the three greatest benefits to SBC? (Place in order of greatest benefit.)” Among the answers were the synonyms clarity, direction and focus. Having a common language, the need to adopt a biblical world view and to encourage growth through Christian education were all central. As a result of the seminars, Springfield strategically made Christian Education the first statement – Growing Through God’s Word. It is the pillar through which all the remaining pillars are given foundation and direction. Among these responses are the following,

- (1) 1. Christian education – members and the staff are being educated in the Word
2. Reaching out to the community – having an impact by presence and contribution of resources. 3. Biblical world view – we are more than Conyers, the state of GA, or even the USA. We are here to impact the world.
- (2) 1. SBC’s leaders and members know who we say we are as a church. We rally around these values. 2. Programs and budgets must align with these values. 3. We hold ourselves accountable to these values. We want others outside of our church to do the same.

G.R.O.W.T.H. provided clarity and continuity, helping the church to remain on course. Any proclivity to operate outside of these guardrails could summarily be identified and dismissed.

The next four questions refer to what Springfield calls the “4-Cs of ministry planning.” They consist of four essential criteria to build unity among ministries and ministry leaders – *continuity, collaboration, communication* and an annual *calendar* that reflects the core values. We asked our respondents, “Do you believe SBC's ministries and leaders have more continuity as a result of implementing the core values? If yes, please provide examples.” The core values are interdependent components of the church. Our respondents demonstrate this by acknowledging how the first value of Christian Education affects the others,

- (1) Our first pillar in our core values is “Growing Through God's Word.” All our ministries are more intentional about making the study of God's Word a key, no matter what the ministry. 2. Helping to Empower the World is our last core value. All of our ministry members pull together to make our Outreach Ministry a success. The effectiveness and great success of this Ministry is due to its leadership and we all rally around this value.
- (2) Yes, G – Growing through God's word. GROWTH U as a vehicle for development of Bible study small group classes, VBS (Vacation Bible School), college level certificate program through ITC (Interdenominational Theological Center) in Atlanta.
- (3) Yes, I have been a part of planning meetings where leaders intentionally consider which of the core values the program or service aligns with. For example, the Young Adult Ministry has a college care package ministry to connect with the teens. Such connection correlates with the “R” in the core values (GROWTH) which is “Reconnecting the generations.” Also, GROWTH University was birthed from the “G” in GROWTH which stands for “growing in God's word.”

In addition to building ministries with continuity to core beliefs and core values, we wanted to make it difficult for ministries to operate in isolation. We wanted to eliminate silos and build a more collaborative ministry structure. Toward that end we asked our respondents, “Do you believe SBC’s ministries and leaders are more collaborative as a result of implementing the

core values? If yes, please provide examples.” Our collaborative efforts in general manifest themselves in ways that bring generations together. The responds wrote,

- (1) Our Harvest of Blessings celebration accommodates nearly 1500 kids and adults. Our Outreach Ministry depends on the collaboration and support of all our ministries to make this happen. 2. Our Senior Ministry (55+) hosts a spaghetti luncheon and invites all our Joshua Generation/Teens free of charge, in support of our Reconnecting Generations value.
- (2) Yes. The multiple generations being acknowledged in worship and practice is one of the most noticeable impacts. There have been more ministry fairs where there is outreach to members and the ministries had to collaborate for that to happen. Also, the Connection cookout/picnic came to be in the time frame of GROWTH and the core values.
- (3) Yes. Core values provide an opportunity for ministries and leaders to work together through Servolution, food distribution, Sunday school, Wednesday night worship service, New member orientation.

We also asked, “Do you believe that communication has improved throughout SBC’s ministries and leaders since implementing core values? If yes, please provide examples.” We acknowledged church growth earlier as an impetus to implement core values. For a church that moved twice within seven years and grew from roughly 100 to 10,000 members, better communication is always an area for greater improvement. When asked about improvement, the respondents stated unanimously that improvement within communication had occurred.

- (1) I believe communications among departments has majorly improved. Leaders know that they must involve other leaders and discuss ideas before fully implementing something. This allows us not to duplicate efforts or step on the toes of others as we are developing strategically. Communication plays a vital role in what we do and our core values help us to improve communications.
- (2) Yes, ministries speak the “core value language.” It has become second nature to mention the values in casual conversation and in planning processes. One example is the core values are communicated within all marketing materials, media outlets, and correspondence materials. In conversation with fellow members and leaders we communicate in pre-planning with the core values in mind. Such unity of thought helps focus the communication and outcomes.

- (3) Yes. Communication has been intentional and there have been different avenues of communication. Technology has aided this intention to communicate. The City and now Realm are platforms for ministry and administration to communicate. The presence of social media as well as streaming services has increased.

The final question related to the 4-Cs is about the annual calendar of events.

Respondents were asked, “Explain how the core values of SBC impact/influence the annual calendar of events and ministry programming.” With so much growth, zeal and so many new ideas, Springfield needed a way to prioritize initiatives and activities. John Maxwell’s book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, encourages church to be more process-driven than event-driven.⁶ Process requires a programmatic, value-centered effort that the core values seminars highlight. The church calendar can be flooded with many initiatives and agendas that could likely contradict what the church stands for if core values are not established, reviewed and enforced. Five years in, the respondents have concurred,

- (1) Events are scheduled only if they align with one or more of our values. Ministry leaders know their request for funds or other resources will be prioritized or approved based on their lining up with our values.
- (2) Activities are planned not because it is a particular month or an annual event. The relevance and impact go into the development of events. There are no “sacred cows” regarding annual events.

The core values of Springfield have equipped leaders to build ministry continuity, inspire collaboration, improve communication and provide quality control with respect to calendar planning in a growing ministry.

In the administrative and human resource development of the church, we asked our respondents if the core values had an impact. More specifically we asked, “Explain how the core

6. John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, revised & updated ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 25.

values of SBC impact/influence developing job descriptions and budgeting in general.” In many of the examples of growing churches, I have discovered that growth in church infrastructure tends to trail behind the growth of the ministry. There is in many cases an administrative department that is trying to put structure to an organic church growth spurt. Springfield administration has for many years sought to catch up to quantitative growth and emerging needs of ministry. In so doing, core values have helped us make critical decisions about personnel. Our respondents, many of whom approve budgets and give oversight to an expanding payroll, have answered in the following fashion,

- (1) As the ministry has grown to reflect the core values, it has impacted job descriptions and budgets. Since implementation of the values, SBC has hired full-time ministry leaders to serve as pastors over ministries. A full-time event planner was also added to accommodate growth. These changes have increased the budget in the area of salaries. The budget also increased to accommodate programming which reflects the values such as the food pantry, scholarships, monetary donations to community organizations, and investment in social media enhancements.
- (2) All job descriptions are expected to demonstrate how this job lines up with our values. New employees are told of our values and of their importance. During the budgeting cycle, ministry leaders and Cabinet Leaders know their request for funds will be judged based on how they support one or more of our values. During our monthly budget reviews, spending and projected spending is reviewed in light of these values.
- (3) As a staff, we try to ensure that all prospective employees directly align with our core values prior to offering employment. Our budgeting must also reflect these values to avoid frivolous spending.

Biblically centered core values govern our calendar, budget construction, activities, job descriptions and even the preaching calendar.

Being biblically sound is one objective of the core values seminars. The other is being communally relevant. The second goal is to ensure that the church addresses the cultural context of the people within the communities. I asked respondents from Springfield, “How do the SBC core values impact/influence Springfield’s service and outreach to the larger community?” Many

of these areas of service have already been mentioned. It bears repeating that these efforts have expanded exponentially in the last five years. Respondents report,

- (1) The core values allow for ministries to be deliberate in evangelism to get the word in deed and resource. The community is reached by the Springfield Christian Academy, Transitional Prison Ministry, Food Pantry, and other resources. The community is impacted whether the community comes to the church or the church goes to the community. Both are done.
- (2) Helping to Empower Our World is a value that leads us outside of our walls. Our Food Pantry program is very well supported because it rests on this key value. Our Senior Ministry reaches out to local nursing homes, rehabilitation centers and hospitals in support of this value. Our Prison Transition Team is also based on our dedication to this value. Our involvement in our local schools is based on this value.
- (3) SBC impacts and influences the community by providing resources on health and wellness, jobs, housing, financial literacy, food and spiritual comfort throughout the year. Street ministry, transition prison ministry and substance abuse ministry.

Springfield has been a job center, a health center, a resource for military veterans, a resource for small businesses and so many other community stake holders. Springfield is a voting precinct, training center, a call center to end sex trafficking, a chamber of commerce partner, a place for town hall meetings, meeting space for local homeowners associations, an arena for school convocations and graduations. Our history compels us to be a community resource and the core values capture that heritage and enable it to expand.

After five years, most respondents say that they would change nothing about the core values as currently constituted. We also asked our respondents if they believe that the core values need to be periodically updated for clarity and/or content. Four out of 12 respondents said that they do not believe that the core values need to be revised for either content or clarity. This finding can be problematic as future generations will certainly be compelled to bring clarity to the core values for future generations. One person believed that improving clarity alone will be needed moving forward. Two responders felt that content only would need to be revised. The

final five respondents believed that both clarity and content will need revision in the future.

Finally, when asked if the core values would survive and sustain ministry beyond their tenure as leaders and/or lifetime, the respondents all unanimously affirmed the future impact of the G.R.O.W.T.H. core values. Their remarks include,

- (1) Yes, I believe the Core Values will survive and sustain the tenure of the church because at the Core of our existence as a church these basic fundamental values are who Springfield Baptist Church will always be. We will forever look to God's Word for directions, always love on one another as Christ has loved us, we will make time to share corporate worship, encourage people to seek out their spiritual gifts and operate in them, forever seek to win the community through evangelism for Jesus, encourage tithing in order to pay the cost associated with helping to empower our world through inreach and outreach.
- (2) I believe these values represent who we are as a church. I believe they are God-given and Bible-based. I would periodically review for clarity but not periodically update for content. We developed these values based on what was contained in Acts 2. Unless Acts 2 changes, or the Lord returns, I would not change their content.
- (3) I believe the values will sustain the tenure and lifetime of the church, because they are all-encompassing and far-reaching. The values may require a relaunching in the next five years along with a fresh perspective or initiative. The goal is to keep the values fresh without them becoming cliché or religious jargon.

Conclusion

The recently retired Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt is the fastest person ever to be timed in a track and field competition. Imagine, of the all the billions of people who've lived and died on the planet, being labeled the fastest person in the history of humankind. Certainly, great sprinters emerge as some of the most recognizable athletes in the world. Inconceivably, Bolt recently disclosed that in all his decades of training he had never run one mile at a time.⁷ He never runs long distances. The application for church leadership is simply that ministry within the church

7. Sarah Begley, "Usain Bolt Has Never Run A Mile (No, Really)," *Time Magazine*, August 3, 2016, accessed August 31, 2019, <http://time.com/4436498/usain-bolt-has-never-run-a-mile/>.

and outreach outside the church is not a sprint. The church must be governed and equipped for the long run. In contrast, the fastest marathoner is Kenyan native Eliud Kipchoge. In September of 2018 Kipchoge “shattered the old [record] by a minute and 18 seconds.”⁸ Ministry is a marathon and not a sprint. Those who take inspiration in biblical numerology or comparisons will be affirmed by the fact that Kipchoge performed this miraculous feat at the ripe age of 33, the year of our Savior’s crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension which was soon followed by the birth of his church.

In my research, there is a material weakness as I could not locate literature or voice to dispute the need for church renewal within the African American community. A recommitment to the work of redemption in the areas outlined in chapter one provide a backdrop to which every African American church regardless of size, budget and location have an opportunity to address. This is a long-term commitment. My intention is to provide and train others to share these seminars with churches periodically and to chart the progress of these ministries as they rediscover the biblical foundation and redemptive ethic that gave us the power to assert human and civil rights for people of color in America.

8. Vernon Loeb, “A New World Record Almost Defies Description,” *The Atlantic*, September 16, 2018, accessed August 31, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2018/09/eliud-kipchoges-world-marathon-record/570400/>.

APPENDIX A

CORE VALUES BEST PRACTICES INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Lincoln & Mamiya contend that “The Black Church (had) no challenger as the cultural womb of the black community. Not only did it give birth to new institutions such as schools, banks, insurance companies, and low income housing, it also provided an academy and an arena for political activities, and it nurtured young talent for musical, dramatic, and artistic development.” The same authors then assert that if 80% of that era’s (1990) black churches were to disappear, that the larger community would never miss them. Given your experience in pastoral ministry, church planting or leadership development within the church, do you agree or disagree with the assessment of Lincoln and Mimya that the African American church is no longer the cultural womb of the black community? What more can churches do to be more relevant to their community context?
2. Outreach Magazine reported on 4.10.18 that In 2050, the percentage of the U.S. population attending church will be almost half of what it was in 1990. Reversing the decline, the article suggests, involves church leaders (clergy and laity) deciding to “redefine the congregation” to meet the needs of the community. What do you believe will be required of contemporary church leadership to reverse African American church decline?
3. For purposes of this interview and project, the foundational departments of the Christian church as defined in Acts 2 consist of 1) Christian Education, 2) Fellowship & Worship, 3) Evangelism, 4) Stewardship and 5) Service/Missions. In your opinion, what other departments if any should be used to assess the church’s progress or relevance.
4. In your assessment, what prevents the African American church from thriving in any or all of these five departments?
5. Are you aware of any resources that have been utilized to equip African American church leaders within their particular context to equip church leaders (clergy and laity) within these five departments? Is there a need for basic training/workshops on the origin and purpose of these departments from a biblical and practical standpoint? If so, how would you quantify or qualify that need?
6. In a survey of 100 contemporary African American pastors:
 - 90 pastors agree that they provide practical theology for practicing Christians within their Christian Education departments.
 - 32 churches provide 1-2 hours of Christian Education per week and another 53 churches provide 3-5 hours per week for Christian Education.
 - 29 pastors report that Christian Education is less than 5% of the budget and another 49 pastors place their budget for Christian Education between 5-15%. Only 8 pastors dedicate 25% or more of their budget for Christian Education.

What are your impressions of this data? Does it comport with your experience and consultation with other churches? What commitments do you feel are necessary to reverse church decline and to restore the African American church as the “cultural womb” of the black community?

7. In a survey of 100 contemporary African American pastors:

- 92 pastors agree that the connection between faith(belief) and fellowship(belonging) is professed within the church
- 89 pastors said that fellowship is intentional (planned and promoted)
- 83 pastors report that their church incorporates multi-generational participation in worship.
- 80 pastors report that fellowship is encouraged through technology (social media, streaming).

What challenges do technology present to the church that values fellowship and worship? How can the African American church compete or reclaim its relevance as the center or cultural womb in a virtual world?

8. The Barna group in a 3.27.18 report found that only 17% of church goers could define the Great Commission. In a survey of 100 contemporary African American pastors:

- 58 churches have a street team dedicated to evangelism.
- 59 churches offer courses that promote models of evangelism.
- 55 churches emphasize evangelism to different ethnic groups.
- 56 pastors report that less than 10% of their new members are new converts and another 32 churches report that less than 25% of their new members are new converts.

The key to any healthy institution is how it reproduces. In your estimation, does the cultural dedication to the historical context of the African American church limit its viability or threaten its survivability? What are the consequences of African American churches that seek to ignore or diminish historical context?

9. In a survey of 100 contemporary African American pastors:

- After mortgage/rent and payroll obligations, 29 pastors indicated that worship and multimedia was the next greatest expenditure. 18 pastors indicated missions.
- 22 pastors indicate that their church has seen the greatest financial reduction in payroll over the past 3 years. 14 pastors indicated transportation.
- 85 pastors indicate that the church has special offerings for projects such as scholarship, debt reduction, capital improvements, etc.

According to medium.com (https://medium.com/@bitmari_/the-black-church-key-to-black-economic-empowerment-64bcca499b8) the black church is the wealthiest institution in the black community without about \$2B in annual resources. What should be the budgetary priority of African American churches given the condition of our context?

10. In a survey of 100 contemporary African American pastors:

- 80 pastors indicate that their church works to diminish the impact of poverty.
- 82 pastors indicate that their church routinely collaborates with other churches and para-church organizations to serve the community.
- 70 pastors indicate that their church seeks to dedicate a minimum of 10% of church revenue for benevolence, service projects, missions and other community service.

- The top five priorities in missions spending in order of highest responses: (1) Food Distribution, (2) Pastoral Care, (3) Scholarships, (4) Public School Partnerships, (5) Funeral Assistance
- The bottom five priorities in missions spending in order of lowest responses: Refugee Assistance, Human trafficking/sex industry, Senior Housing, Community Watch, Narcotics Anonymous

What community service priorities must be addressed in order for the church to regain its status as the “cultural womb” or cornerstone of the African American community?

APPENDIX B

CORE VALUES BEST PRACTICES INTERVIEWS

This seminar will highlight interviews with three pastors of “best practice” churches within the African American context. These pastors include: Dr. Derrick Hughes, First Baptist Church of Piney Grove, Lauderdale Lakes, FL; Dr. Darryl Canady, Rodman Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, PA; and Dr. Cynthia Hale, Ray of Hope Christian Church of Decatur, GA. These pastors were selected because their ministry methodology best exemplifies the approach that I am proposing to elevate the redemptive value of African American church through biblical fidelity and community engagement.

INTERVIEW ONE: Dr. Derrick Hughes, First Baptist Church of Piney Grove of Lauderdale Lakes, FL

First Baptist Church of Piney Grove was founded in 1904 and is the oldest baptist church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Rev. Dr. Derrick Hughes has been the pastor since 2010.¹ Dr. Hughes, who holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He is also the founder of OmniVision, a church-consulting firm focused on helping churches reach their God intended potential. First Baptist Church is the second congregation to benefit from Dr. Hughes leadership. According to Dr. Hughes, the ministry at First Baptist Church has grown to more than 4,500 members under his leadership. The church worships four times per week. As both church practitioner and church consultant, Dr. Hughes’ example and expertise are akin to the method of leadership training detailed in this thesis.

1. Dr. Derrick Hughes, Interview by Eric W. Lee, Conducted By Phone, March 29, 2019.

At the conclusion of his first tenure as pastor and the beginning of his second tenure at First Baptist Church in Piney Grove, Dr. Hughes brought his model ministry of the “The Living Church”. Dr. Hughes inherited a mission, vision, and core beliefs to begin his new administration of leadership. To those defining statements, he added the guardrails necessary to define and direct the church’s witness to its larger community:

The seven vital areas of the body of Christ, namely;

- 1) Partnership (becoming committed believers),
- 2) Precept (maturing as disciples of Jesus)
- 3) Participation (serving in ministry)
- 4) Purpose (fulfilling the great commandment)
- 5) Protection (nurturing and strengthening families)
- 6) Progress (impacting communities for the cause of Christ)
- 7) Praise (worshipping God in all we do).

We believe that this produces the body of Christ to be a “Living Church”.

Upon his arrival as pastor, Dr. Hughes established a culture of vision casting meetings with his leadership and then the church at large to implement “The Living Church” criteria. The result was a unanimous vote in 2010 to adopt these seven core values as the language and ministerial identity of the church. It is noteworthy that Dr Hughes’ core values correspond to the pillars of the church that I have identified in this thesis. The worship pillar is categorized as praise (worshipping God in all we do). The Christian Education pillar is defined by partnership (becoming committed believers) and precept (maturing as disciples of Jesus). The Fellowship pillar is likened to the purpose (fulfilling the great commandment) and protection (nurturing and strengthening families). The Service pillar is connected to progress (impacting communities for the cause of Christ) and participation (serving in ministry).

According Dr. Hughes, all ministry programming, ministry strategies, calendar events and budgets are determined by the compliance to these seven areas of ministry. Though, the evangelism pillar is not clearly articulated within these areas of focus, Dr. Hughes has a clear

goal of expanding the ministry to more than 10,000 members. His evangelism efforts focus on the congregation's outreach to unchurch family members, coworkers and friends. Under Dr. Hughes' leadership, a church that was declining in attendance and membership has added 3,000 new members. The annual budget has increased by \$400,000 annually.

The increase in finance and membership has also created opportunities for expansion of community outreach. The church is home to a private Christian school for boys grades 1 through 12. The Piney Grove Boys Academy was founded in 2014 and has already received a gubernatorial citation. The church has also founded a clinic off the coast of Haiti in 2013. The clinic, established in the poorest nation within the western hemisphere, is staffed by 5 people and costs the ministry \$35,000 to \$40,000 annually. The facility makes healthcare available to some 50,000 residents as needed.

In addition, the church's emphasis on building "The Living Church" has resulted in numerous community initiatives. First Baptist founded a mentoring program in collaboration with the Juvenile Justice Department in Broward County. The church distributes bread and provides meals weekly. They provide a free health fair for their community. Finally, the church provides a clothing drive that ministers to the homeless. When asked if he agrees with the assessment of Lincoln and Mimya, that the church is no longer the cultural womb of the African American community or the assertion of Dr Eddie Glaude, that the black church is dead, Dr. Hughes disagrees. In his own words "It is still the cultural womb of the black community. We are still the meeting place of the community we service. Yes there are churches that would not be missed because all they do is have church on Sunday. Luke 4:18 requires more of us than worship. Churches have no business being in business if they do not serve their community."²

2. Dr. Derrick Hughes, Interview.

Dr. Hughes' fundamental understanding of the New Testament church is one that includes exaltation, worship and obedience to the Great Commission. There is a need for multidimensional ministry that responds to the hungry, the hurting and captive.

When asked what prevents the African American church from thriving in any or all of the pillars of the church, Dr. Hughes believed the greatest obstacle to be instruction. He believes that every church ought to be a disciple making factory and not just a place of worship. Without this emphasis, the American church is nothing more than a religious social club. Dr. Hughes states plainly “Regardless of size and budget, every single church must have this mission.”³ The First Baptist Church of Piney Grove spends approximately 30% of their annual budget on Christian Education and offers more than six hours per week in Christian Education programming. These statistics place them among the most intentional with respect to Christian Education as only 8 churches among the 100 surveyed had budgetary allocations of more than 25% annually. Dr. Hughes has very innovative outreach to millennials within his fellowship. He conducts social media forums on Group Meet to keep this generation engaged in spiritual formation and in fellowship with the church.

INTERVIEW TWO: Dr. Darryl Canady, Rodman Street Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, PA

Rodman Street Baptist Church was founded in 1880. The Rev. Dr. Darryl Canady left a 15 year pastorate in Wilson, North Carolina, to accept the position as senior pastor since 2010. The Rodman Street Baptist Church has 1,500 members. Under Dr. Canady, Rodman Baptist has adopted a mission of providing “Biblical Instruction, Relevant Preaching and Teaching, Visionary Leadership, and a Welcoming Atmosphere”. They seek to be “A cross-culturally

3. Dr. Derrick Hughes, Interview.

effective, inter-generationally committed, mobilized congregation with a sense of community.”⁴

Dr. Canady calls the vision a “Community of Hope”. Conceived by Dr. Canady, the “Community of Hope” consists of 6 pillars contained within the three aspirational goals of the church. These goals are to 1) grow the spiritual and social lives of people of all ages (Relationships), to 2) enhance educational, economic and employment opportunities in the community (Skills), and to 3) Improve access to health services and enhance physical wellbeing (Wellness). Dr. Canady instituted these core values in 2018 at the instruction of fellow pastor Dr. Kevin Cosby, President of Simmons College in Kentucky and the Pastor of Saint Stephens Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Canady is also an active member of the Lott Carey Mission Global Christian Missional Community which models biblically sound and communally relevant church leadership models. Dr. Canady organized the church leadership namely trustees, deacons and deaconess every first Wednesday of the month to develop the core values and goals. He sought to eradicate silos in ministry which is the consequence of the failure to align ministries to the purpose of the church. Dr. Canady also utilized the work of Don Cousins, formerly of Willow Creek Church, entitled *Experiencing Leader Shift: Letting Go of Leadership Heresies*. The integration of these core values are currently within their first year after adoption.

Like Dr. Hughes, Dr. Canady does not wholeheartedly embrace the notion that the African American church has largely lost its claim as the cultural womb of the black community. However, he believes that many churches have lost their cutting edge and have become complacent and comfortable regarding their mission and responsibility to the larger community. Dr. Canady believes that churches that are relevant and take a holistic approach (mind, body, and spirit) to ministry will be rewarded with growth, viability and longevity. For Dr. Canady, the

4. Dr. Darryl Cannady, Interview By Eric W. Lee, Conducted By Phone, March 31, 2019.

solution oriented church that responds to the needs of its community is essentially the key to church renewal. He declares, “a relevant church meets needs.”⁵

A noteworthy event in the history of Rodman Street Baptist Church occurred when the original church was victimized by arson in the in 1970s. Six other African American congregations collaborated and shared their resources until Rodman completed reconstruction. This network of seven churches continue to support each other under the banner of the East End Fellowship. In this way, these African American churches model the importance of fellowship within the church and among other congregations within the same context.

INTERVIEW THREE: Dr. Cynthia Hale, Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, GA

Dr. Cynthia Hale is the founding pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Georgia, established in 1986. Her ministry has always benefited from the discipline of strategic planning. Dr. Hale believed that in order to lead a growing church with sustainability that they needed to be clear about the mission, vision and core values. The result of this discipline and her studies at Duke University and United Theological Seminary, Dr. Hale has always sought be clear about the “raison d’etre” of the church. What follows is the wisdom of more than thirty years of pastoral leadership:

The Mission: Transforming your world through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. **The Vision:** To be a City of Hope where people will impact and transform our present world into the Kingdom of God! **The Core Values:** 1) Exalt the Savior 2) Equip the Saint 3) Evangelize the Seeker 4) Empower through Stewardship 5) Elevate Society.⁶ The core values were developed by the pastor and shared during strategic planning in 1991. Dr. Hale met with her board,

5. Dr. Darryl Cannady, Interview.

6. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Interview By Eric W. Lee, Conducted By Phone, April 1, 2019.

appointment moderators, elders, deacons and chairpersons, creating a conclave that refined the mission and vision statement. Dr. Hale's core values would undergo another phase of refinement in 1996. At every stage, the consensus building pastor taught and promoted the core values that were unanimously adopted.

Dr. Hale's core values also correspond to the pillars of the church that have been posited by this thesis. "Exalt the savior" is the worship pillar; "Equip the saint" is the Christian education pillar; "Evangelize the seeker" is the evangelism pillar; "Empower through stewardship" is the stewardship pillar; Finally, "Elevate society" is the service pillar and the central focus of this thesis. How we "exalt the savior" should inform how we "elevate society". Dr. Hale brought subject matter experts to speak and teach on each of the church pillars, allotting two months per core value. When she focused on evangelism within the church, more than five hundred people joined Ray of Hope in 1991 enabling the church to double in size. As a consequence, Ray of Hope grew by at least 500 new members every year from 1991 to 2008. The scriptural model for Ray of Hope's core values emerge from the New Testament church model in Acts 2:42-47, which is identical to the methodology promoted in this thesis.

Since 1991, Ray of Hope has utilized their core values as the guardrails of all programing, ministry initiatives, calendars of events and budget construction. The cultivation of core values enables church programing for the coming year to be finalized by August. The budget for the coming year is then constructed to support the programming by November 1st of each year. Dr. Hale rigidly uses three leadership principles to govern the life of the congregation. First, all programming must be faithful in equipping the saints. Second, the church must be fearless in going after the loss. Finally, her leaders and staff must be fruitful in fulfilling the vision and mission of the church.

In addition to the remarkable evangelical achievements of Ray of Hope, their core values have enabled Dr. Hale and the ministry to amass an extraordinary list of accomplishments and to have an incredible impact in Dekalb County and Decatur Georgia. The result has been the creation of a 501c3 entitled “The City of Hope”. Ray of Hope is building a City of Hope. Their signature ministry is Hope Through Health Mobile Clinic that has served its local community and has provided international healthcare needs in Kenya and Haiti. Ray of Hope has an extensive Homeless ministry called Reconnection which provides meals and toiletries for the homeless. As poverty has transitioned from the inner cities of Atlanta to the suburbs of Decatur, Dr. Hale and Ray of Hope have been on the forefront of transitioning their church to meet emerging needs. Ray of Hope has created the City of Hope with a housing initiative. They have built single family homes and purchased homes for affordable housing. They have built homes in Haiti. Most especially, they have purchased an apartment complex with 112 units providing housing for veterans and members of the recovery community. Ray of Hope annually supports Feed My Starving Children and just recently packed 105,000 meals that will feed 289 children for an entire year in the Dominican Republic.

Dr. Hale emphatically disagrees that the church has been displaced as the cultural womb of the African American community. Yet, she acknowledges that a shift is occurring where many churches have abdicated their responsibility to “elevate society.” Dr. Hale asserts, “The prophetic voice of the African American church has surrendered to the message of prosperity.”⁷ The suburban African American church must address the spiritual and economic poverty within our context. In order to clearly renew the church’s reality as the cultural womb, Dr. Hale insists

7. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Interview.

that the church has to reclaim its authority as the education enter and social service provider of our communities.

Dr. Hale believes that the church must work through these biblical pillars to gain authenticity and authority. This adoption of church pillars must be achieved through proper teaching and leadership at the top. Dr. Hale asserts that core values only work when the pastor makes it a priority. Ray of Hope is one the few churches interviewed or surveyed that make outreach its highest budgetary priority after mortgage and payroll obligations. Finally, when asked what initiatives in her context are critical for the church to address, Dr. Hale believes that the key to remaining or reclaiming communal, redemptive relevance is involvement within local schools. Dr Hales says, “Involvement in the schools, education through collaboration is the greatest opportunity for ministry. Teachers, parents, politicians, law enforcement and students lives are all impacted by school involvement. Everything from addressing human trafficking and poverty to the basic need for school supplies is right within our schools.”⁸

8. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Interview.

APPENDIX C
PASTORAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

By completing this questionnaire you are volunteering to participate in a study for the completion of a doctoral thesis at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. The purpose of this survey is to assess the guiding principles of pastoral leadership among contemporary African American churches. All information will be confidential and anonymous and will be utilized to assess the need for additional training for African American pastors. For purposes of this study, an African American church is defined as a church led by African American or Caribbean American pastors with 80% African American or Caribbean American members.

1. What was the founding year of the church where you pastor? _____

Christian Education & Discipleship

2. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's Christian Education program. (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

A. My church's Christian Education department provides practical theology for practicing Christians.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

B. My church's Christian Education department provides education for at least 4 generations.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

C. Christian Education participation is a clear expectation for the entire church.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

D. Christian Education participation is expected and enforced for church leadership.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

E. My church has a well defined, strategic Christian Education statement of purpose, slogan or scripture.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

F. My church's Christian Education department addresses the crisis of Biblical illiteracy.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

G. My Christian Education department provides required, ongoing training for current and prospective teachers.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

3. How many hours per week does your church offer Bible-based Christian Education?

A. 0 B. 1-2 C. 3-5 D. 5-10 E. 10+

4. Which range best describes your church's budgetary commitment (leadership training, church school, Bible study, Bible institutes, Vacation Bible school, teacher development, etc.) to Christian Education?

A. 0-5% of the Budget B. 5-15% of the Budget C. 16-25% of the Budget
D. more than 25%

Worship & Fellowship

5. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's worship and fellowship culture? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

A. My church takes field trips and out of town trips that build relationships.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

B. My church is intentional about conducting regular seasonal and annual fellowship-centered events that promote intergenerational interaction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

C. Our worship regularly incorporates opportunities for multiple generational participation (nursery, children's church, teen church, young adults and seniors).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

D. My church features recreational ministries, fitness groups and team sports offerings for church membership.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

E. My church encourages membership interaction through digital means such as social media and live streaming.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

F. Our church professes the connection between believing (faith) and belonging (fellowship).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

G. Our church provides baby blessings, grief sharing opportunities for bereaving families and/or peer group ministries for singles, couples and other demographics.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

6. How often does your church offer the sacraments (Baptism & the Lord's Supper)?

A. 1-4 per year B. 5-10 per year C. 11-15 per year D. As Needed E. Never

7. Which statement best describes your church's leadership approach to a theology of fellowship? (One Answer)

A. Fellowship is optional (non-essential) B. Fellowship is accidental (not planned)

C. Fellowship is minimal (diminished or discouraged) D. Fellowship is intentional (planned and promoted)

Evangelism

8. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's approach to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

A. My church has an evangelism team that shares Christ with the general public.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

B. My church offers Christian Education courses about Biblical models of evangelism and contemporary approaches.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

C. My church has seasonal evangelism challenges for the entire membership.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

D. My church discourages evangelism that places individuals at personal risk.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

E. My church places an intentional emphasis on evangelism to different ethnic groups beyond African Americans.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

F. Our church is comfortable with its current size and is disinterested in evangelism.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

G. Our church resists the commitment necessary to expand services or build new facilities to accommodate growth.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

9. What percentage of your church's new members are new converts to Christianity?

A. Less than 10% B. Less than 25% C. Approximately 50%

D. More than 50%

10. How many approximate baptisms does your church conduct annually?

A. 0-15 B. 16-35 C. 36-50 D. 51-100 E. 100+

Stewardship

11. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's approach to stewardship/giving? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

A. Giving expectations are clearly defined with Biblical support and pastoral appeals.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

B. Christian Education classes are provided that give doctrinal support to giving expectations and personal financial management.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

C. Capital improvements (roofing, plumbing, electrical, etc.) are addressed as emergencies with special appeals/offerings as needed.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

D. Our church has created a climate of transparency and anti-fraud financial management including regular meetings, audits and reviews.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

E. The church invests in digital platforms for giving via the internet, website, text-to-give, etc.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

F. Our church promotes special giving opportunities for scholarships, building funds, debt reduction, etc.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

G. Stewardship is taught as more than financial management but time, talent and asset management as well.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

12. After mortgage/rent and payroll obligations, which category represents the next greatest budgetary allocation? (Select One)

A. Worship & Multimedia B. Capital Improvements C. Christian Education D. Construction E. Program Events F. Administration G. Missions/Benevolence

13. Which church budgetary line items have decrease within the last 3 years? (Select All That Apply)

A. Missions/Benevolence B. Payroll C. Christian Education
D. Capital Improvements E. Transportation F. Civic Contributions/Scholarships
G. Program Events H. Building Fund G. Worship & Multimedia

Service

14. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's approach to outreach and community service? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

A. My church believes in and seeks to responsibly implement the Tithing-The-Tithe principle (10% of church budget is provided to community service, benevolence, missions and other projects).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

B. My church routinely provides church wide service project opportunities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

C. My church collaborates with other churches and para-church organizations to broaden its capacity to serve.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

D. My church seldom if ever engages in service projects that do not originate from church leadership or membership.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

E. My church intentionally celebrates and promotes our service project accomplishments.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

F. My church is known throughout the community for making significant contributions to service projects.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

G. My church works to diminish the impact of poverty.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree I Don't Know

15. As a service delivery agency in the African American community, which areas of service does your church contribute to directly? (Select All That Apply)

A. Food Distribution B. Scholarships C. Healthcare/Medicine/Health Education D. Funeral Assistance E. Mentoring F. Senior Housing/Services H. Partnerships with Public Schools I. Community Watch J. Narcotics/Alcohol Anonymous
K. Prison Ministry L. Foreign Missions M. Human Trafficking/Sex Industry N. Refugee Assistance O. Homelessness/Affordable Housing P. Pastoral Care/Spiritual Direction
Others: _____

16. What approximate percentage of your church membership directly contributes to or participates in service projects and initiatives?

A. Zero B. Under 10% C. 10%-25% D. 26%-50% E. 51% or more F. No service projects

APPENDIX D

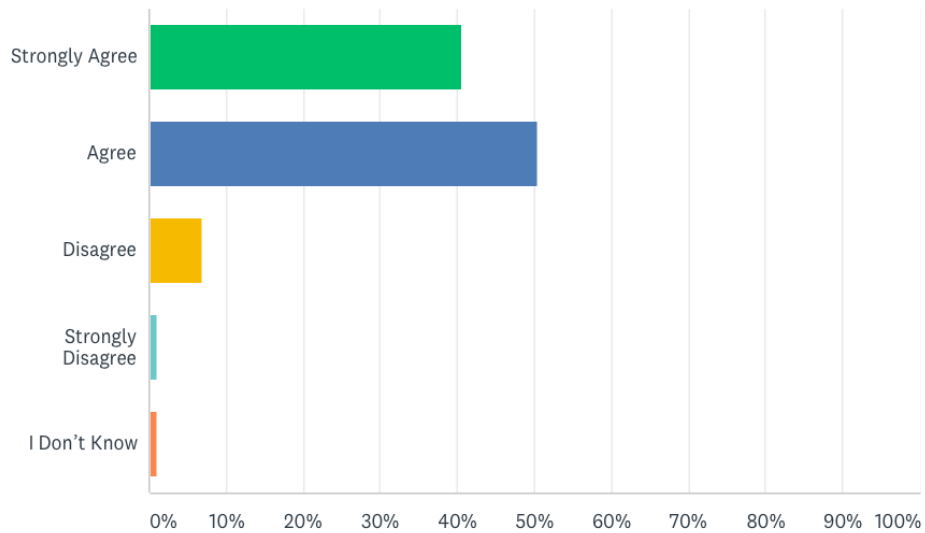
PASTORAL SURVEY RESPONSES

Q2



My church's Christian Education department provides practical theology for practicing Christians.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



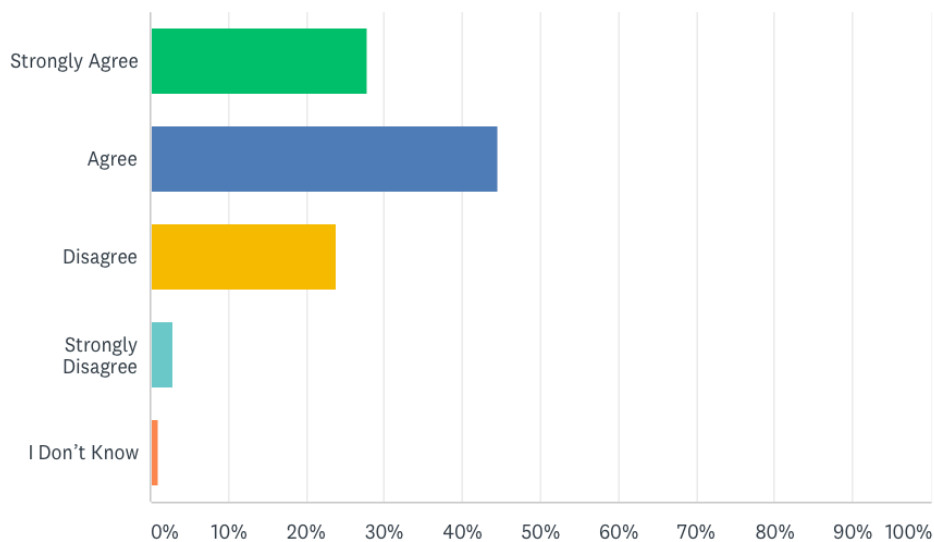
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	40.59%	41
Agree	50.50%	51
Disagree	6.93%	7
Strongly Disagree	0.99%	1
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q3



My church's Christian Education department provides education for at least 4 generations.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



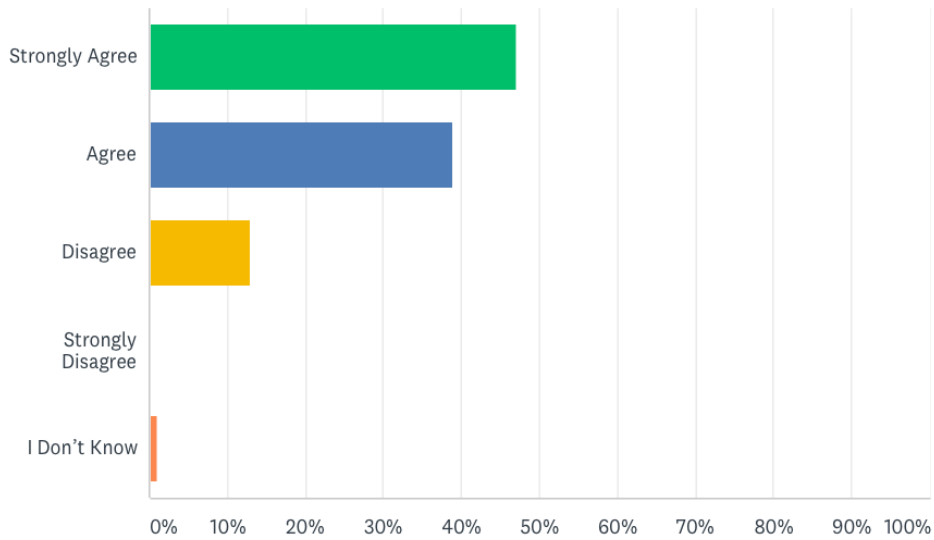
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	27.72%	28
Agree	44.55%	45
Disagree	23.76%	24
Strongly Disagree	2.97%	3
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q4



Christian Education participation is a clear expectation for the entire church.

Answered: 100 Skipped: 1



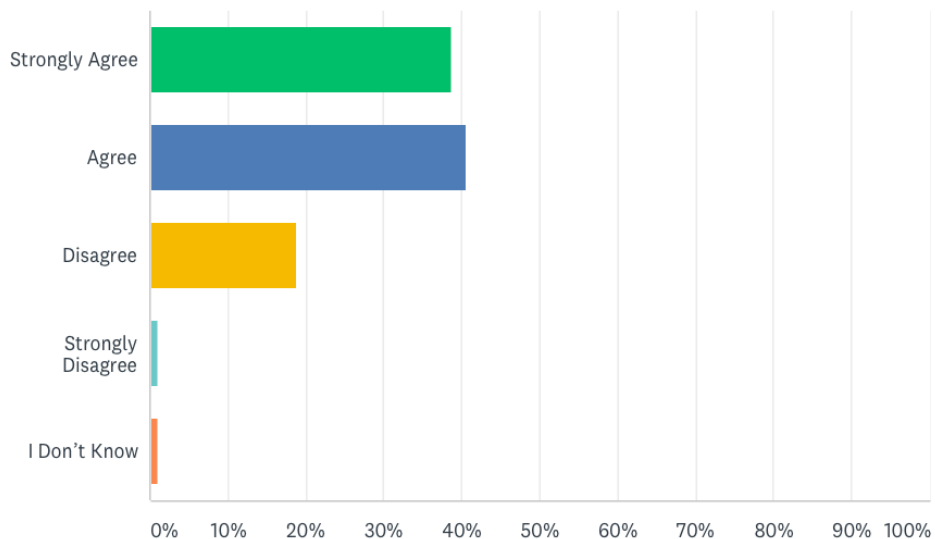
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	47.00%	47
Agree	39.00%	39
Disagree	13.00%	13
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
I Don't Know	1.00%	1
TOTAL		100

Q5



Christian Education participation is expected and enforced for church leadership.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



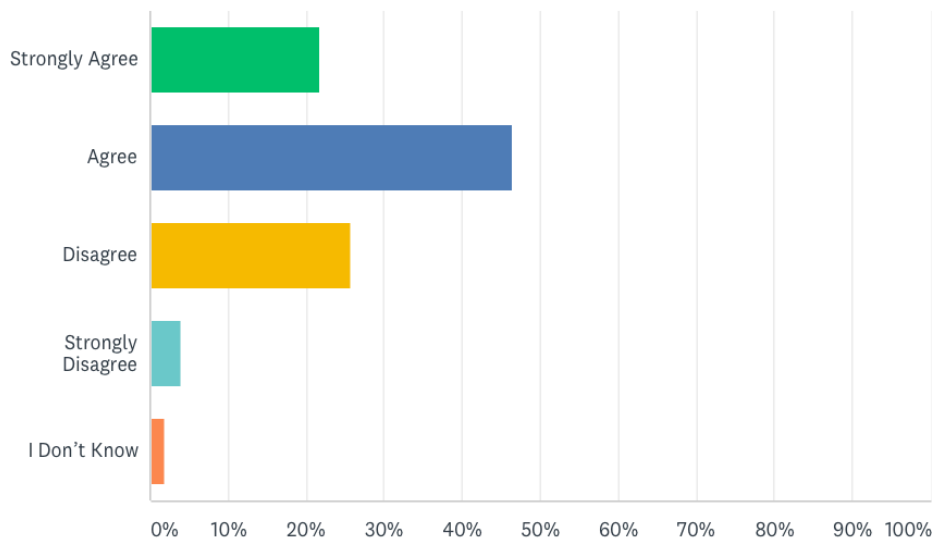
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	38.61%	39
Agree	40.59%	41
Disagree	18.81%	19
Strongly Disagree	0.99%	1
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q6



My church has a well defined, strategic Christian Education statement of purpose, slogan or scripture.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



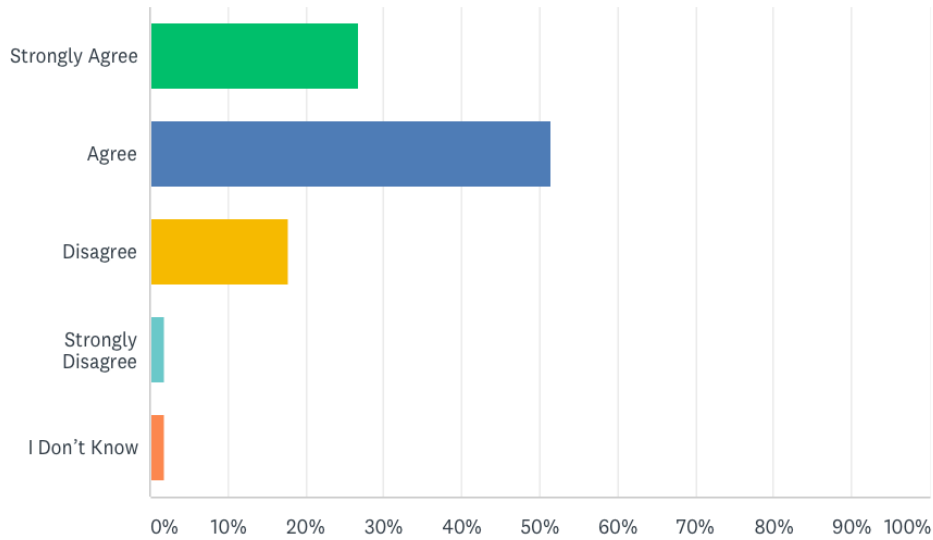
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	21.78%	22
Agree	46.53%	47
Disagree	25.74%	26
Strongly Disagree	3.96%	4
I Don't Know	1.98%	2
TOTAL		101

Q7



My church's Christian Education department addresses the crisis of Biblical illiteracy.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



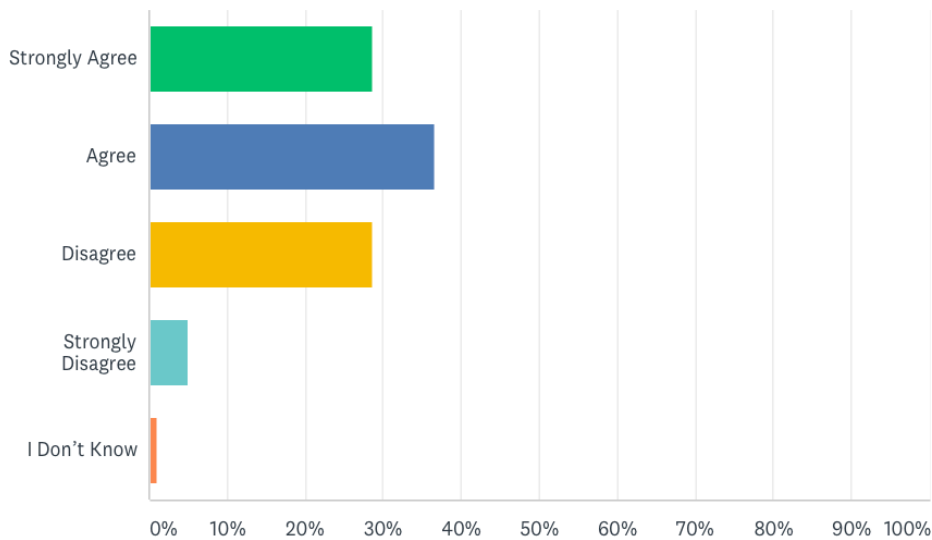
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	26.73%	27
Agree	51.49%	52
Disagree	17.82%	18
Strongly Disagree	1.98%	2
I Don't Know	1.98%	2
TOTAL		101

Q8



My Christian Education department provides required, ongoing training for current and prospective teachers.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



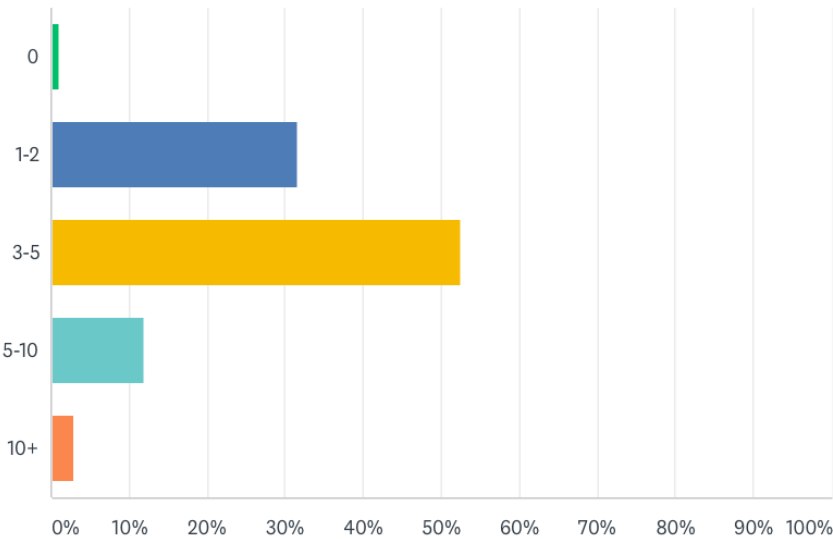
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	28.71%	29
Agree	36.63%	37
Disagree	28.71%	29
Strongly Disagree	4.95%	5
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q9



How many hours per week does your church offer Bible-based Christian Education?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



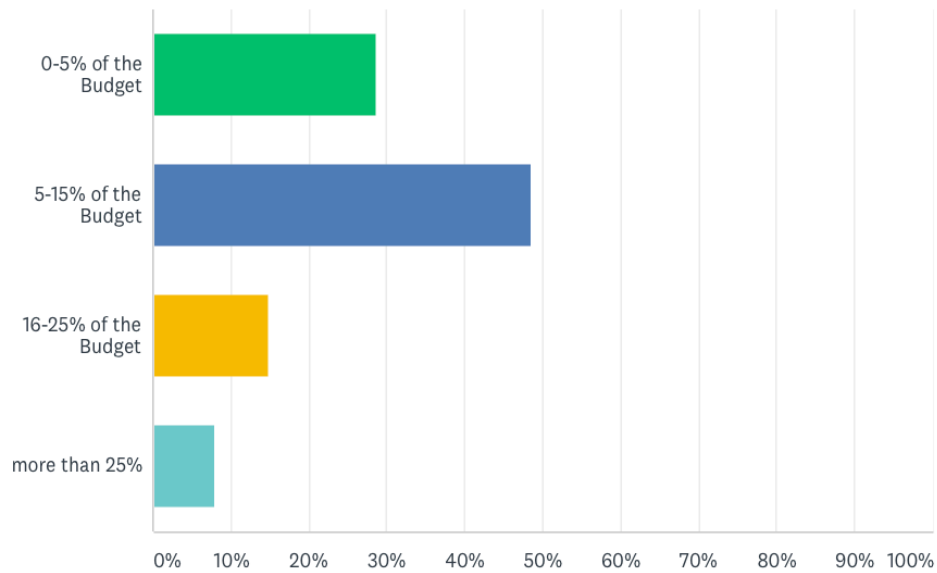
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0	0.99%	1
1-2	31.68%	32
3-5	52.48%	53
5-10	11.88%	12
10+	2.97%	3
TOTAL		101

Q10



Which range best describes your church's budgetary commitment (leadership training, church school, Bible study, Bible institutes, Vacation Bible school, teacher development, etc.) to Christian Education?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



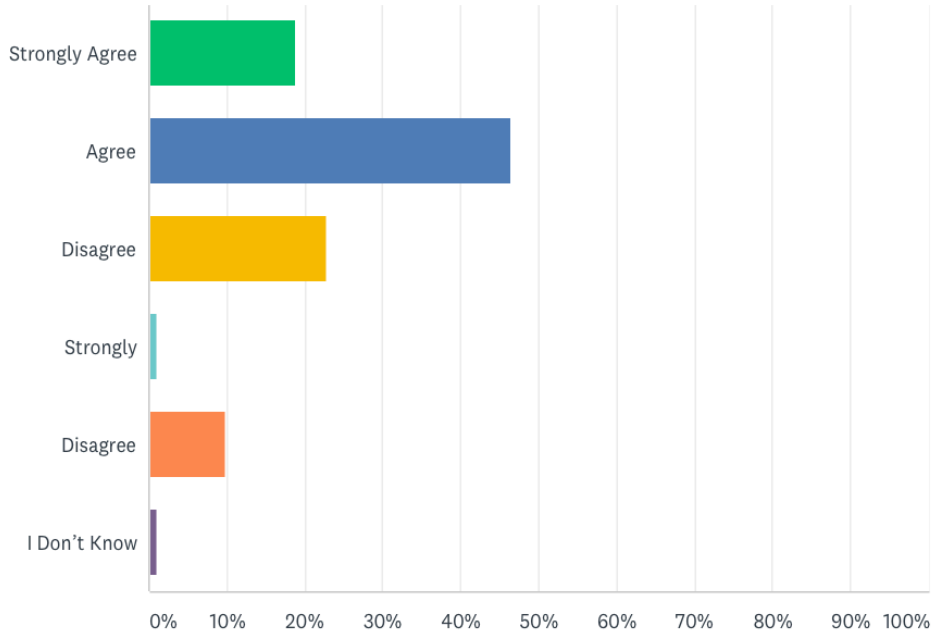
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-5% of the Budget	28.71%	29
5-15% of the Budget	48.51%	49
16-25% of the Budget	14.85%	15
more than 25%	7.92%	8
TOTAL		101

Q11



My church takes field trips and out of town trips that build relationships.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



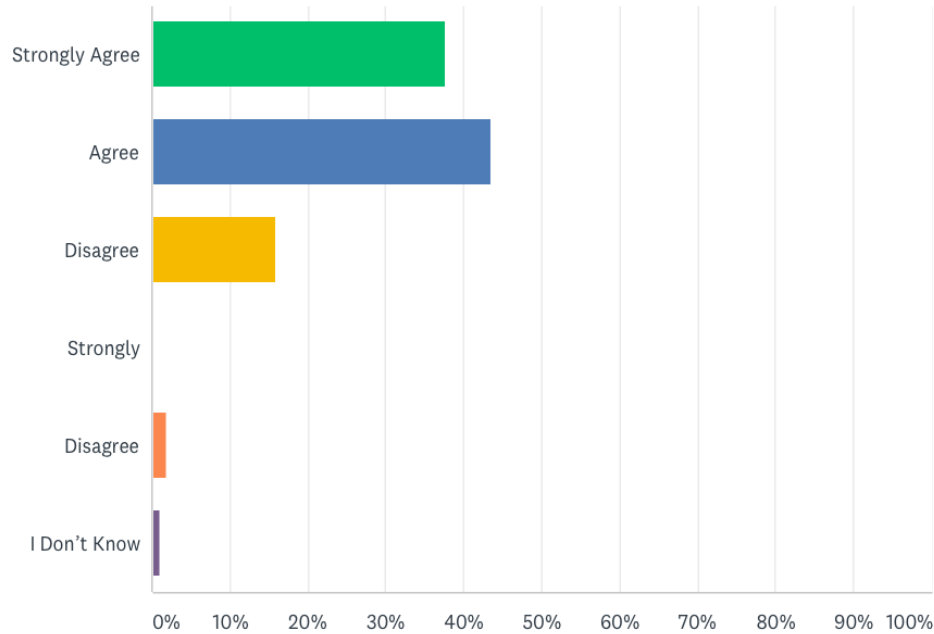
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	18.81%	19
Agree	46.53%	47
Disagree	22.77%	23
Strongly	0.99%	1
Disagree	9.90%	10
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL	101	

Q12



My church is intentional about conducting regular seasonal and annual fellowship-centered events that promote intergenerational interaction.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



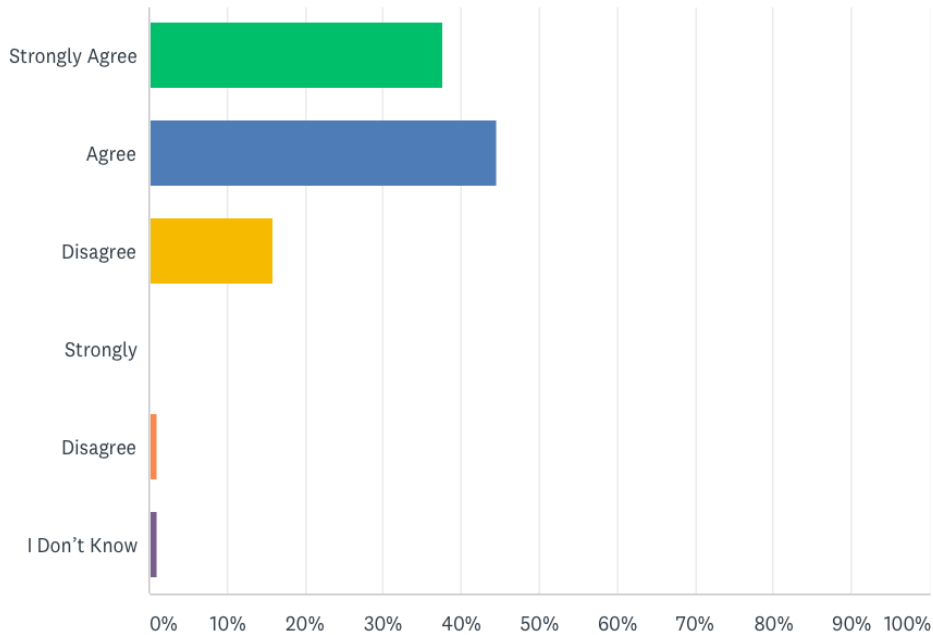
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	37.62%	38
Agree	43.56%	44
Disagree	15.84%	16
Strongly	0.00%	0
Disagree	1.98%	2
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL	101	

Q13



Our worship regularly incorporates opportunities for multiple generational participation (nursery, children's church, teen church, young adults and seniors).

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



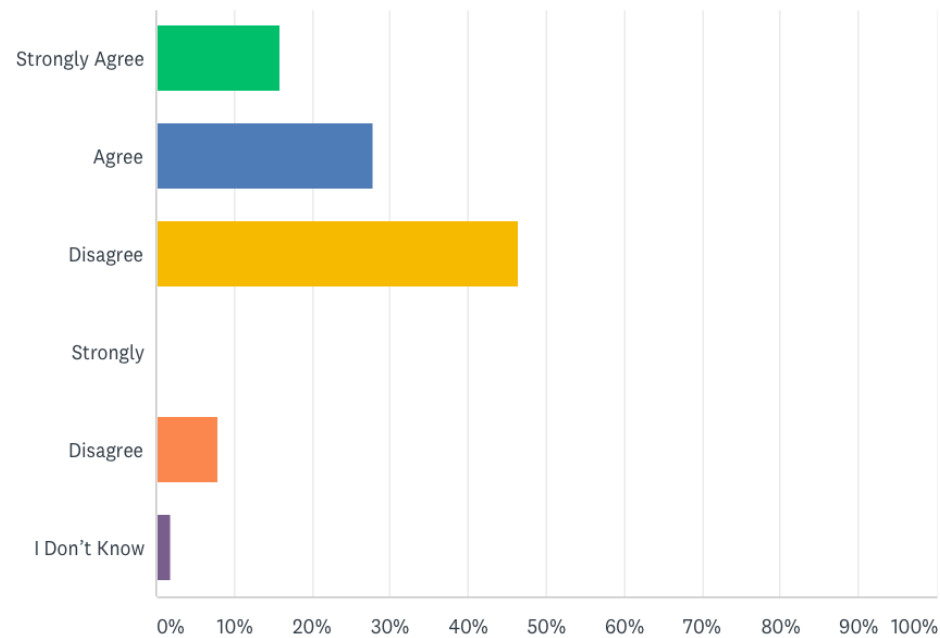
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	37.62%	38
Agree	44.55%	45
Disagree	15.84%	16
Strongly	0.00%	0
Disagree	0.99%	1
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q14



My church features recreational ministries, fitness groups and team sports offerings for church membership.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



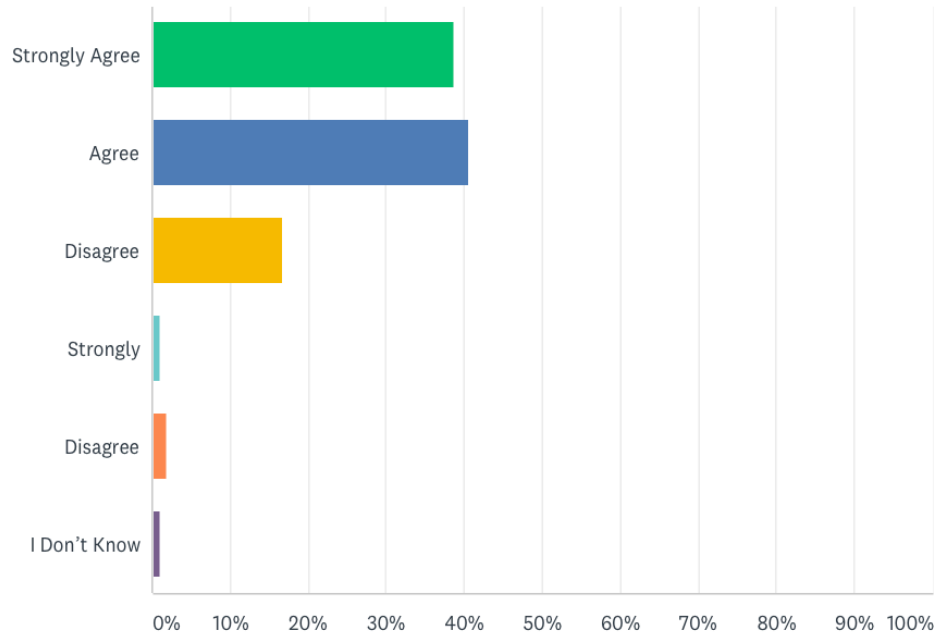
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	15.84%	16
Agree	27.72%	28
Disagree	46.53%	47
Strongly	0.00%	0
Disagree	7.92%	8
I Don't Know	1.98%	2
TOTAL		101

Q15



My church encourages membership interaction through digital means such as social media and live streaming.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



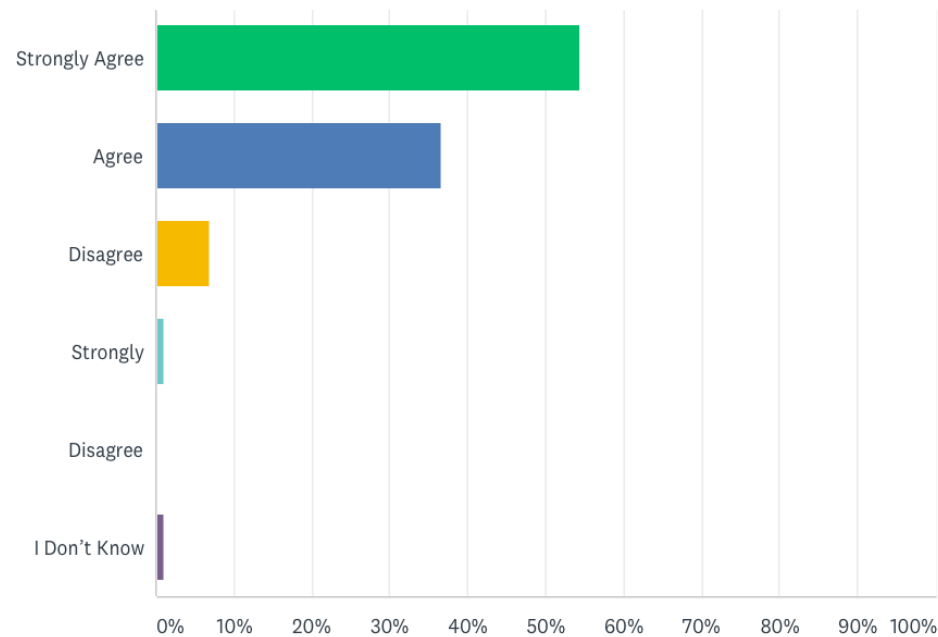
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	38.61%	39
Agree	40.59%	41
Disagree	16.83%	17
Strongly	0.99%	1
Disagree	1.98%	2
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q16



Our church professes the connection between believing (faith) and belonging (fellowship).

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



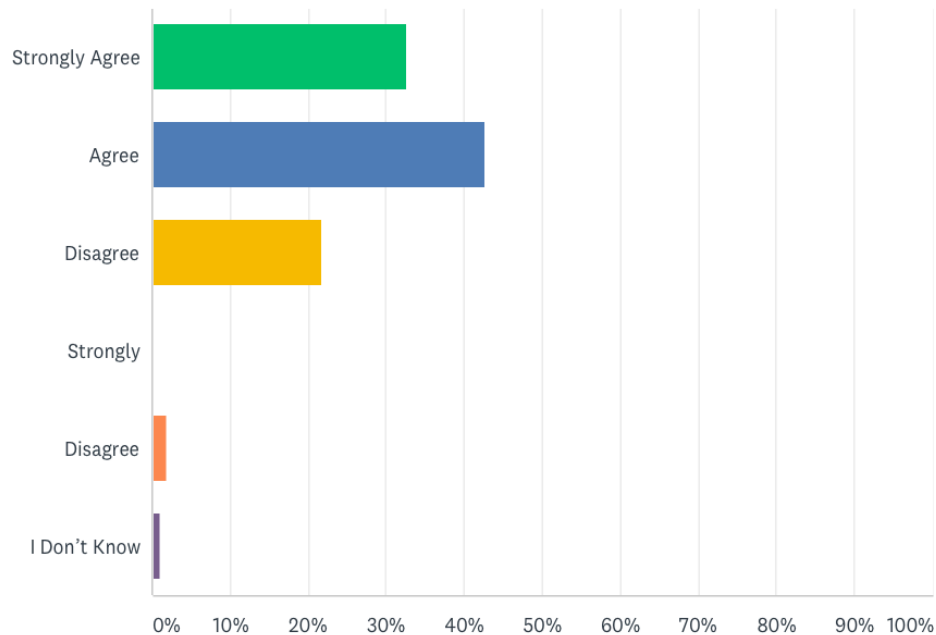
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	54.46%	55
Agree	36.63%	37
Disagree	6.93%	7
Strongly	0.99%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q17



Our church provides baby blessings, grief sharing opportunities for bereaving families and/or peer group ministries for singles, couples and other demographics.

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



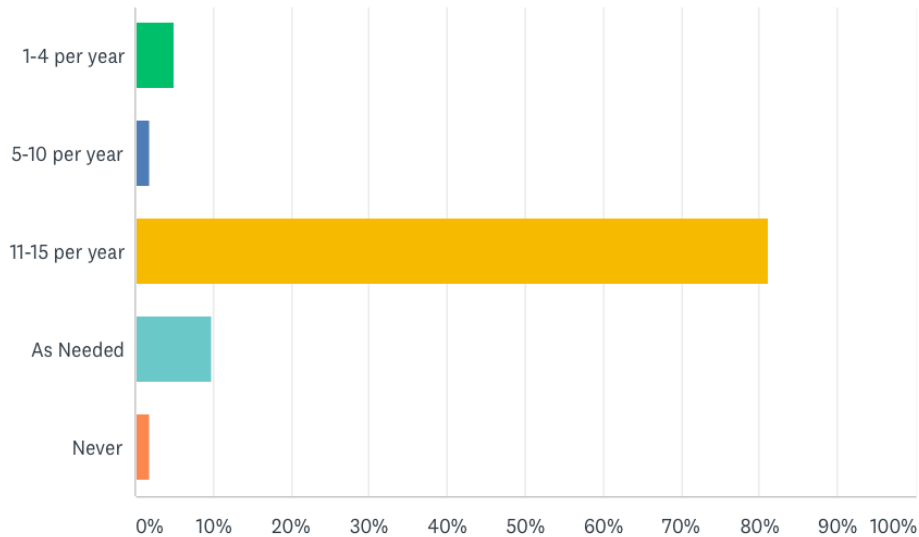
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	32.67%	33
Agree	42.57%	43
Disagree	21.78%	22
Strongly	0.00%	0
Disagree	1.98%	2
I Don't Know	0.99%	1
TOTAL		101

Q18



How often does your church offer the sacraments (Baptism & the Lord's Supper)?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



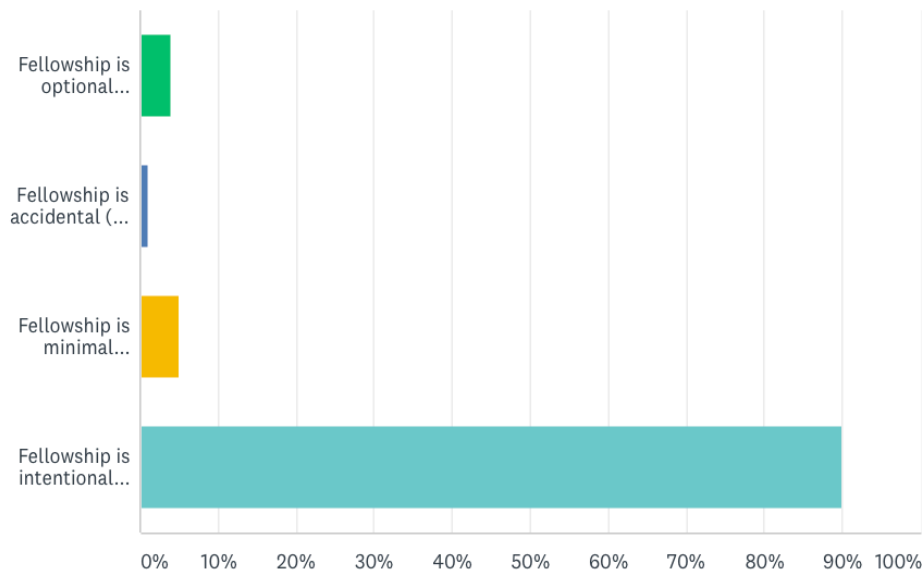
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1-4 per year	4.95%	5
5-10 per year	1.98%	2
11-15 per year	81.19%	82
As Needed	9.90%	10
Never	1.98%	2
TOTAL		101

Q19



Which statement best describes your church's leadership approach to a theology of fellowship?
(indicate only one Answer)

Answered: 99 Skipped: 2



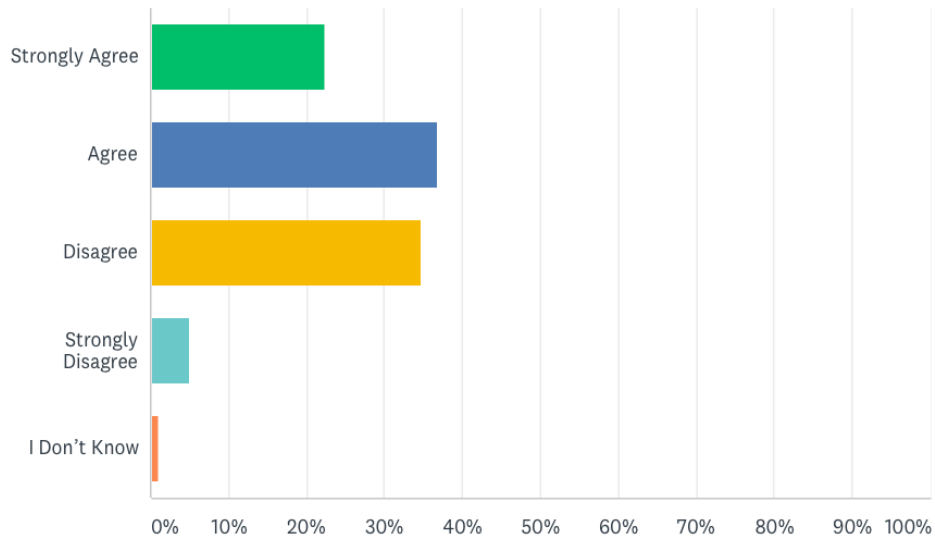
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fellowship is optional (non-essential)	4.04%	4
Fellowship is accidental (not planned)	1.01%	1
Fellowship is minimal (diminished or discouraged)	5.05%	5
Fellowship is intentional (planned and promoted)	89.90%	89
TOTAL		99

Q20



My church has an evangelism team that shares Christ with the general public.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



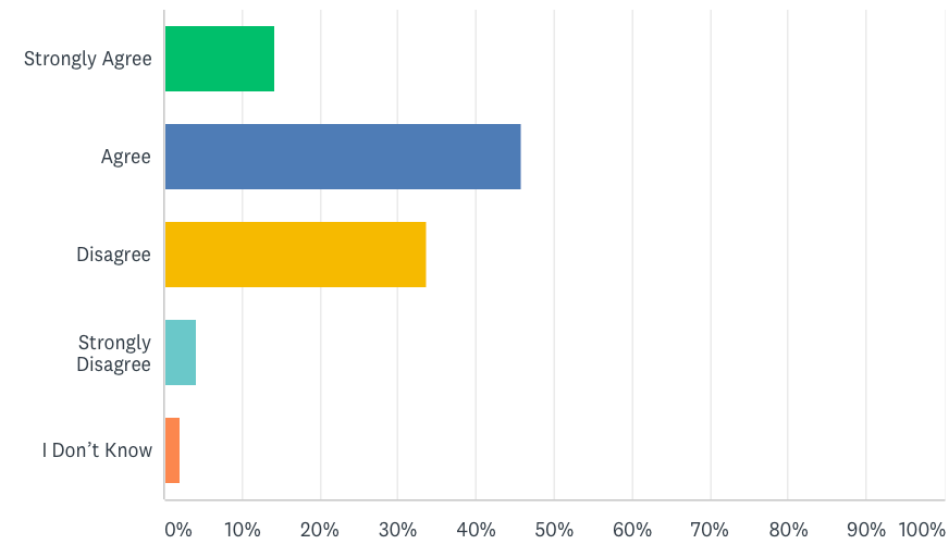
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	22.45%	22
Agree	36.73%	36
Disagree	34.69%	34
Strongly Disagree	5.10%	5
I Don't Know	1.02%	1
TOTAL		98

Q21



My church offers Christian Education courses about Biblical models of evangelism and contemporary approaches.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



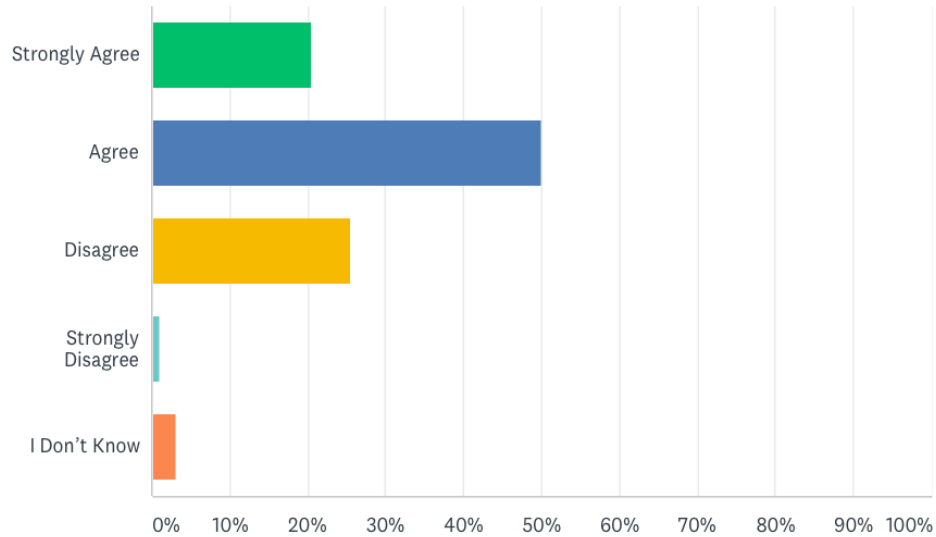
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	14.29%	14
Agree	45.92%	45
Disagree	33.67%	33
Strongly Disagree	4.08%	4
I Don't Know	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q22



My church has seasonal evangelism challenges for the entire membership.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



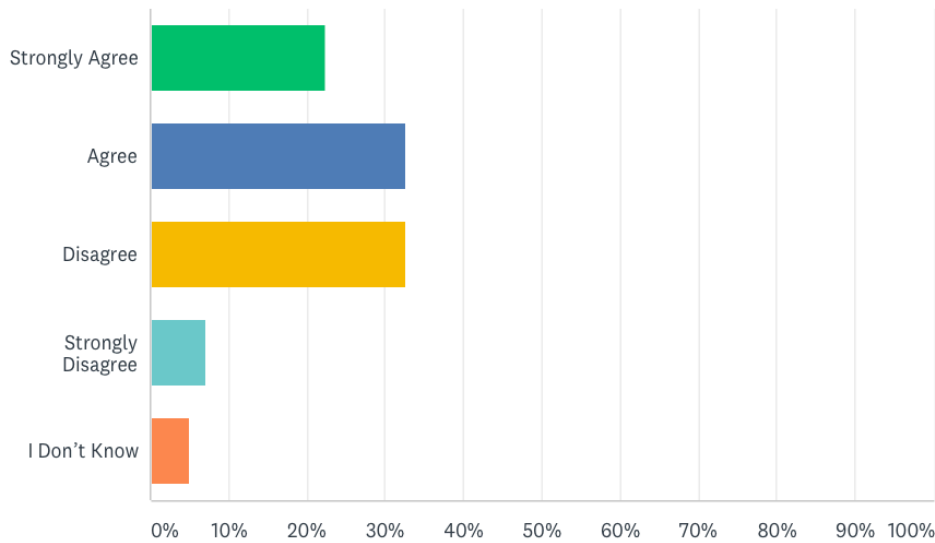
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	20.41%	20
Agree	50.00%	49
Disagree	25.51%	25
Strongly Disagree	1.02%	1
I Don't Know	3.06%	3
TOTAL		98

Q23



My church discourages evangelism that places individuals at personal risk.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



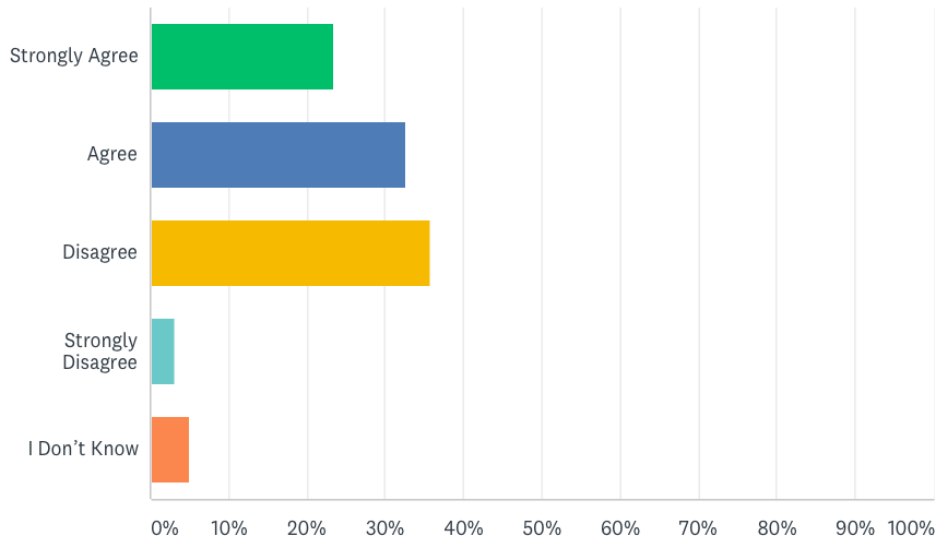
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	22.45%	22
Agree	32.65%	32
Disagree	32.65%	32
Strongly Disagree	7.14%	7
I Don't Know	5.10%	5
TOTAL		98

Q24



My church places an intentional emphasis on evangelism to different ethnic groups beyond African Americans.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



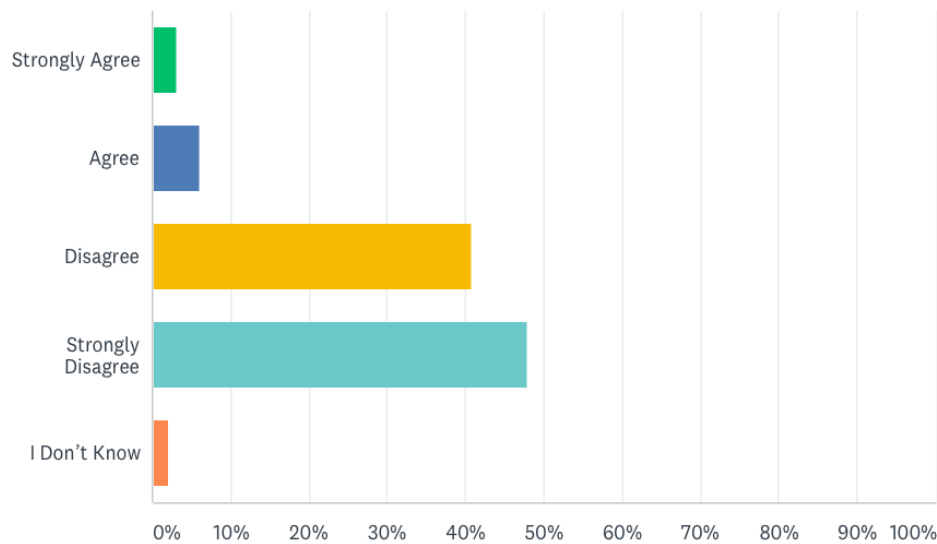
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	23.47%	23
Agree	32.65%	32
Disagree	35.71%	35
Strongly Disagree	3.06%	3
I Don't Know	5.10%	5
TOTAL		98

Q25



Our church is comfortable with its current size and is disinterested in evangelism.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



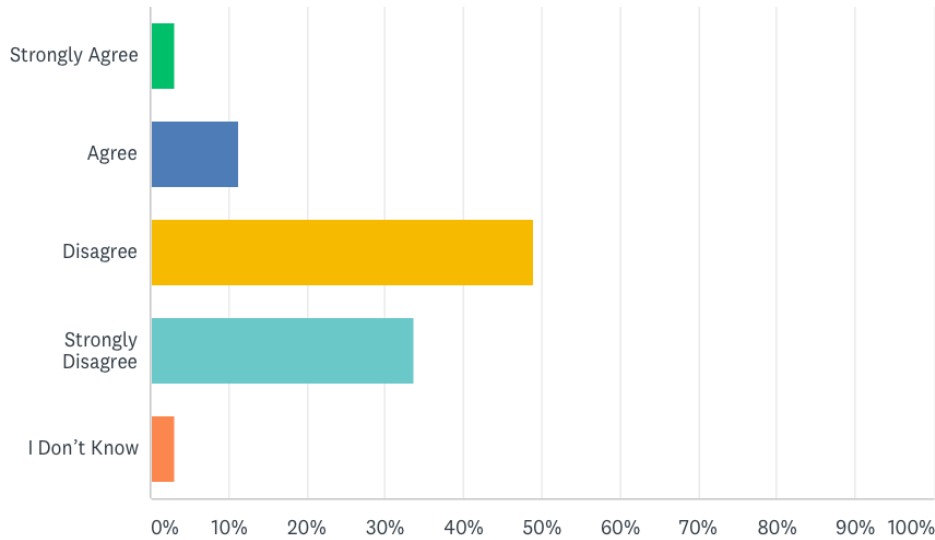
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	3.06%	3
Agree	6.12%	6
Disagree	40.82%	40
Strongly Disagree	47.96%	47
I Don't Know	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q26



Our church resists the commitment necessary to expand services or build new facilities to accommodate growth.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



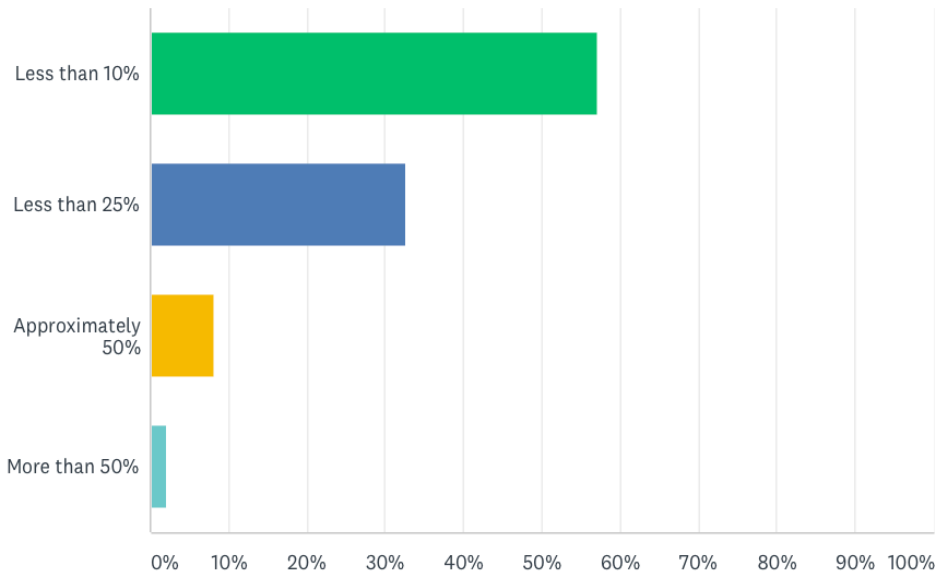
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	3.06%	3
Agree	11.22%	11
Disagree	48.98%	48
Strongly Disagree	33.67%	33
I Don't Know	3.06%	3
TOTAL		98

Q27



What percentage of your church's new members are new converts to Christianity?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



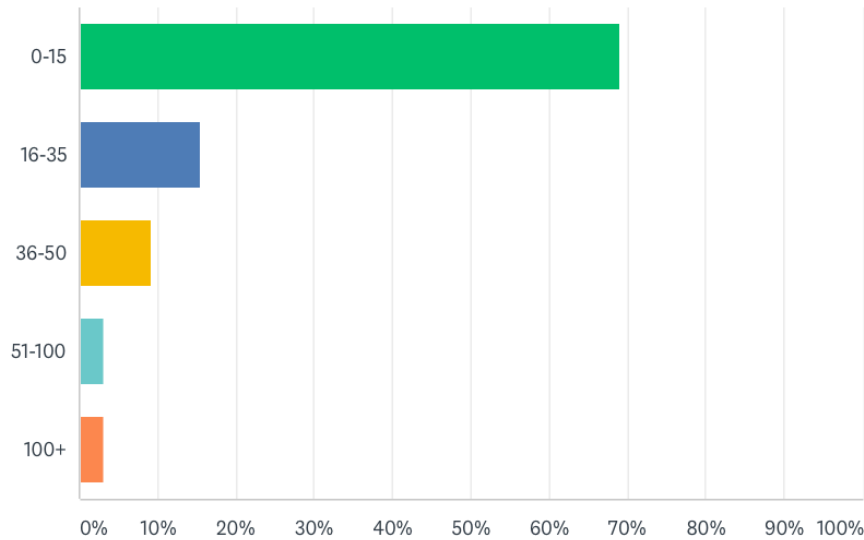
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 10%	57.14%	56
Less than 25%	32.65%	32
Approximately 50%	8.16%	8
More than 50%	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q28



How many approximate baptisms does your church conduct annually?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 4



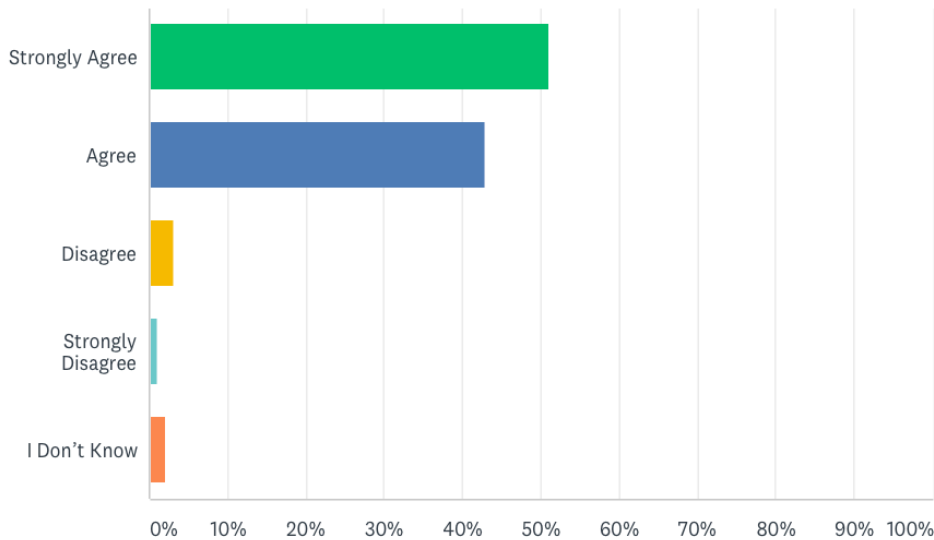
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-15	69.07%	67
16-35	15.46%	15
36-50	9.28%	9
51-100	3.09%	3
100+	3.09%	3
TOTAL		97

Q29



Giving expectations are clearly defined with Biblical support and pastoral appeals.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



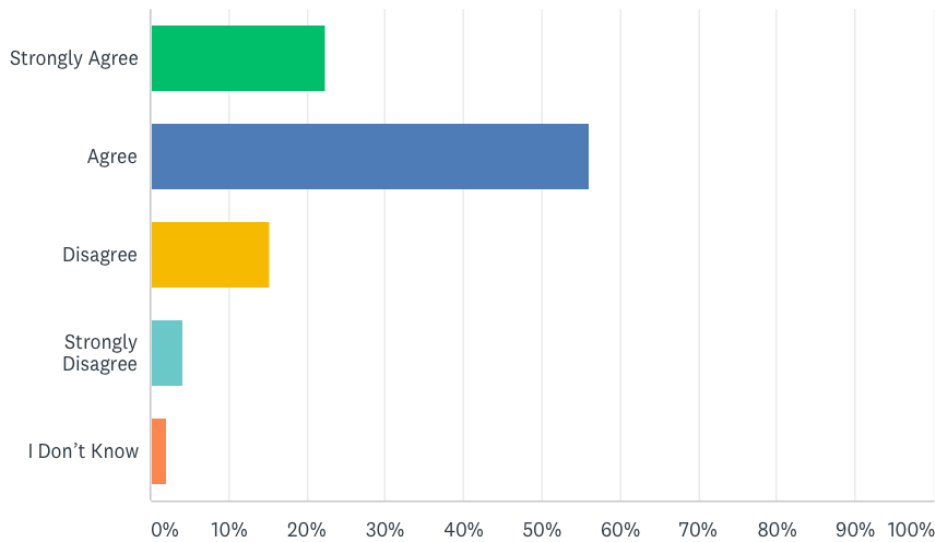
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	51.02%	50
Agree	42.86%	42
Disagree	3.06%	3
Strongly Disagree	1.02%	1
I Don't Know	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q30



Christian Education classes are provided that give doctrinal support to giving expectations and personal financial management.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



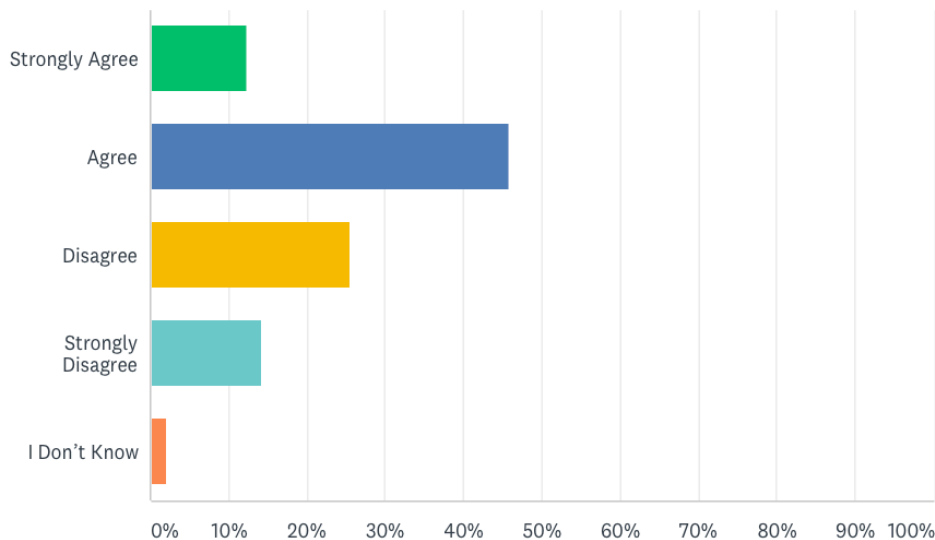
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	22.45%	22
Agree	56.12%	55
Disagree	15.31%	15
Strongly Disagree	4.08%	4
I Don't Know	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q31



Capital improvements (roofing, plumbing, electrical, etc.) are addressed as emergencies with special appeals/offerings as needed.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



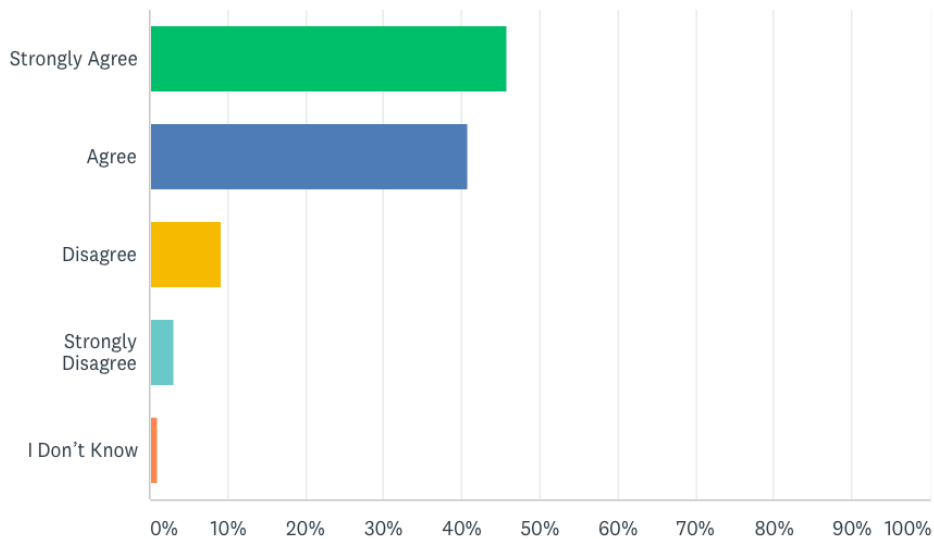
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	12.24%	12
Agree	45.92%	45
Disagree	25.51%	25
Strongly Disagree	14.29%	14
I Don't Know	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q32



Our church has created a climate of transparency and anti-fraud financial management including regular meetings, audits and reviews.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



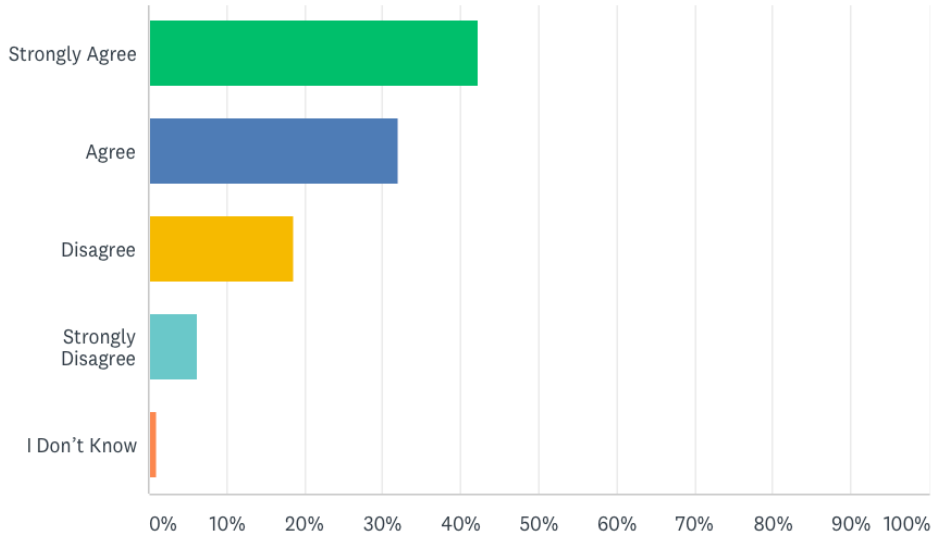
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	45.92%	45
Agree	40.82%	40
Disagree	9.18%	9
Strongly Disagree	3.06%	3
I Don't Know	1.02%	1
TOTAL		98

Q33



The church invests in digital platforms for giving via the internet, website, text-to-give, etc.

Answered: 97 Skipped: 4



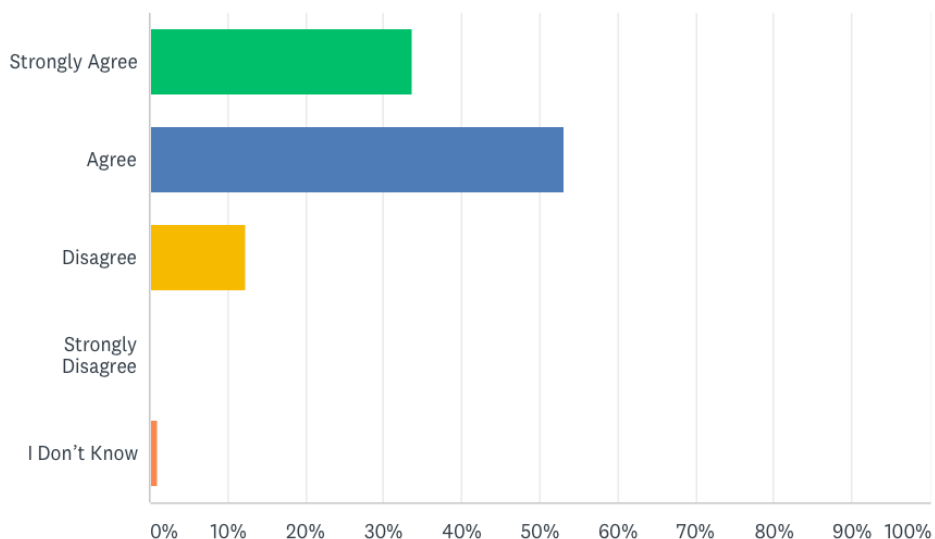
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	42.27%	41
Agree	31.96%	31
Disagree	18.56%	18
Strongly Disagree	6.19%	6
I Don't Know	1.03%	1
TOTAL		97

Q34



Our church promotes special giving opportunities for scholarships, building funds, debt reduction, etc.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



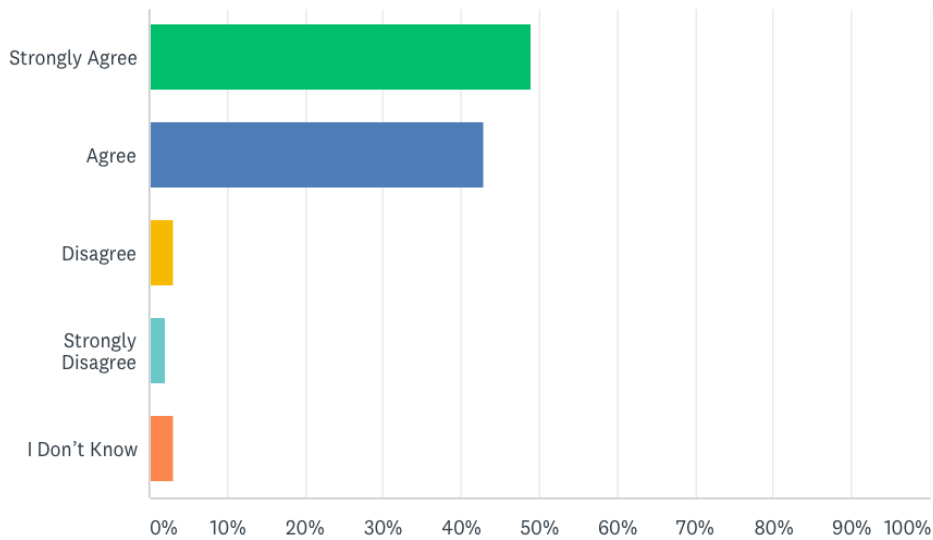
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	33.67%	33
Agree	53.06%	52
Disagree	12.24%	12
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
I Don't Know	1.02%	1
TOTAL		98

Q35



Stewardship is taught as more than financial management but time, talent and asset management as well.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3

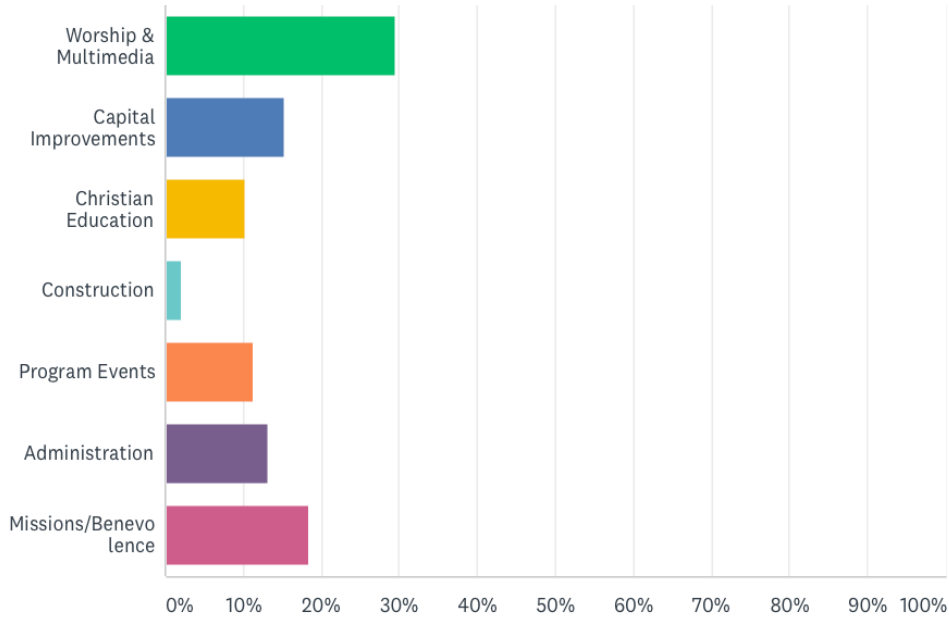


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	48.98%	48
Agree	42.86%	42
Disagree	3.06%	3
Strongly Disagree	2.04%	2
I Don't Know	3.06%	3
TOTAL		98



After mortgage/rent and payroll obligations, which category represents the next greatest budgetary allocation? (Select One)

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



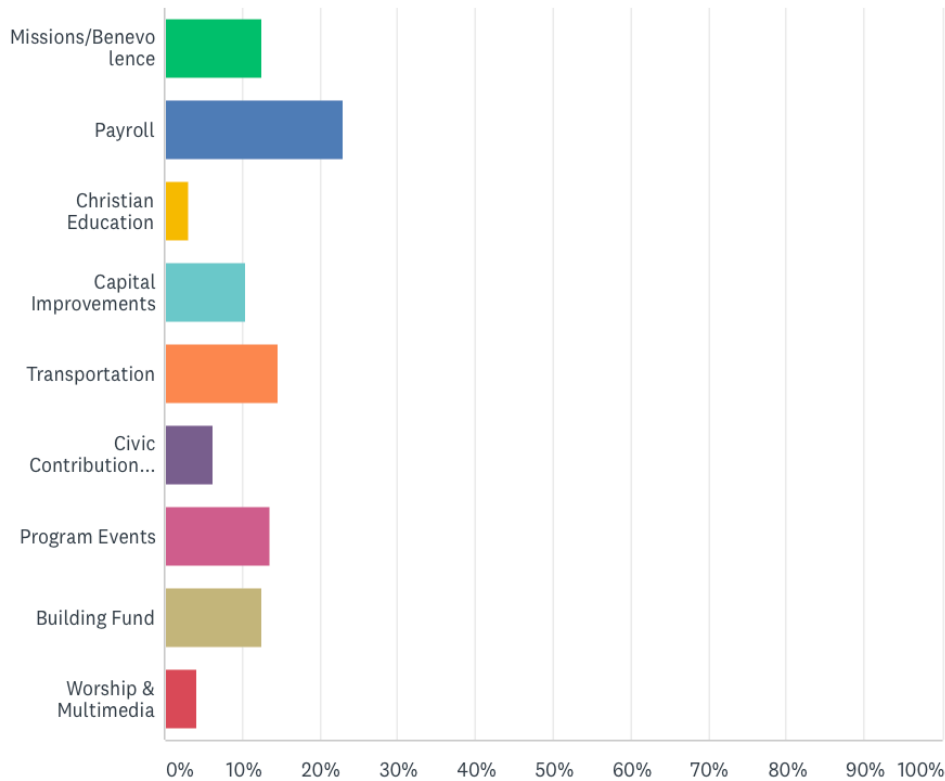
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Worship & Multimedia	29.59%	29
Capital Improvements	15.31%	15
Christian Education	10.20%	10
Construction	2.04%	2
Program Events	11.22%	11
Administration	13.27%	13
Missions/Benevolence	18.37%	18
TOTAL		98

Q37



Which church budgetary line items have decrease within the last 3 years? (Select All That Apply)

Answered: 96 Skipped: 5



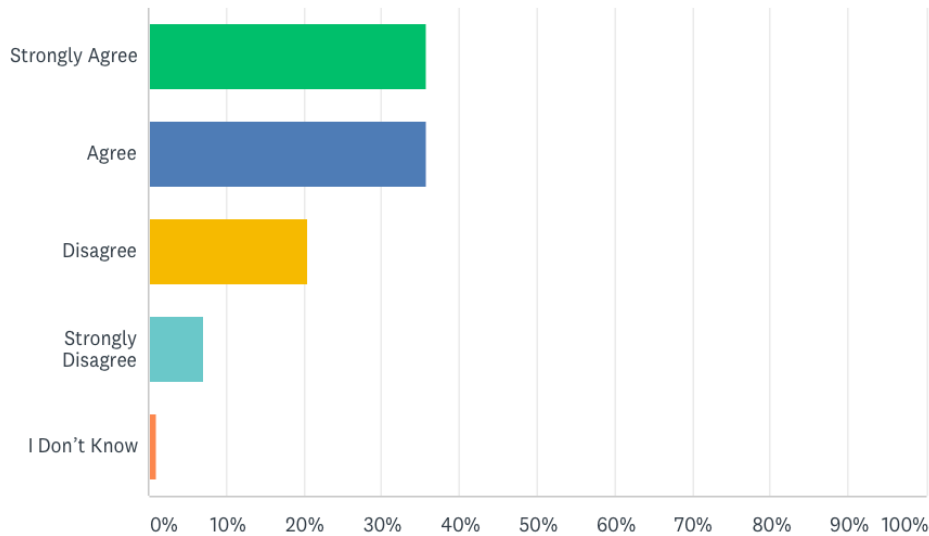
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Missions/Benevolence	12.50%	12
Payroll	22.92%	22
Christian Education	3.13%	3
Capital Improvements	10.42%	10
Transportation	14.58%	14
Civic Contributions/Scholarships	6.25%	6
Program Events	13.54%	13
Building Fund	12.50%	12
Worship & Multimedia	4.17%	4
TOTAL		96

Q38



My church believes in and seeks to responsibly implement the Tithing-The-Tithe principle (10% of church budget is provided to community service, benevolence, missions and other projects).

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



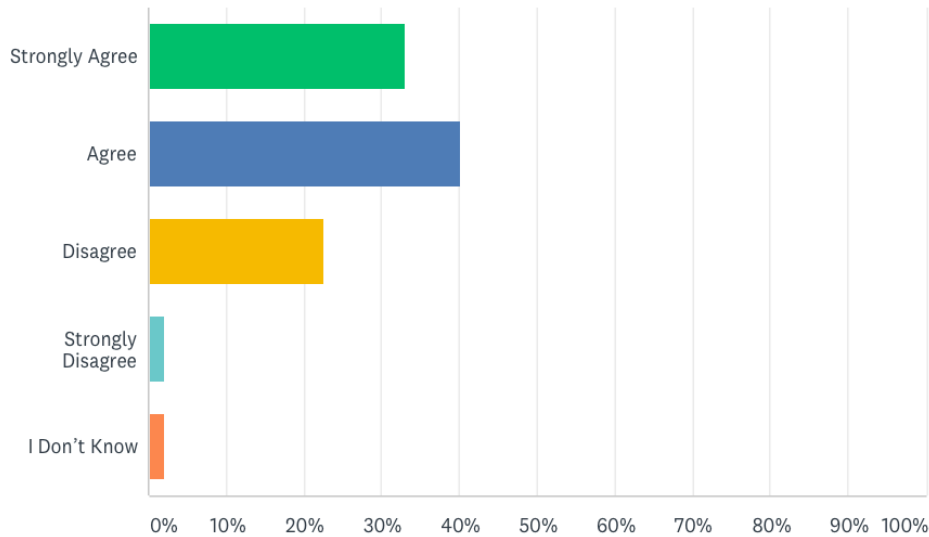
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	35.71%	35
Agree	35.71%	35
Disagree	20.41%	20
Strongly Disagree	7.14%	7
I Don't Know	1.02%	1
TOTAL		98

Q39



My church routinely provides church wide service project opportunities.

Answered: 97 Skipped: 4



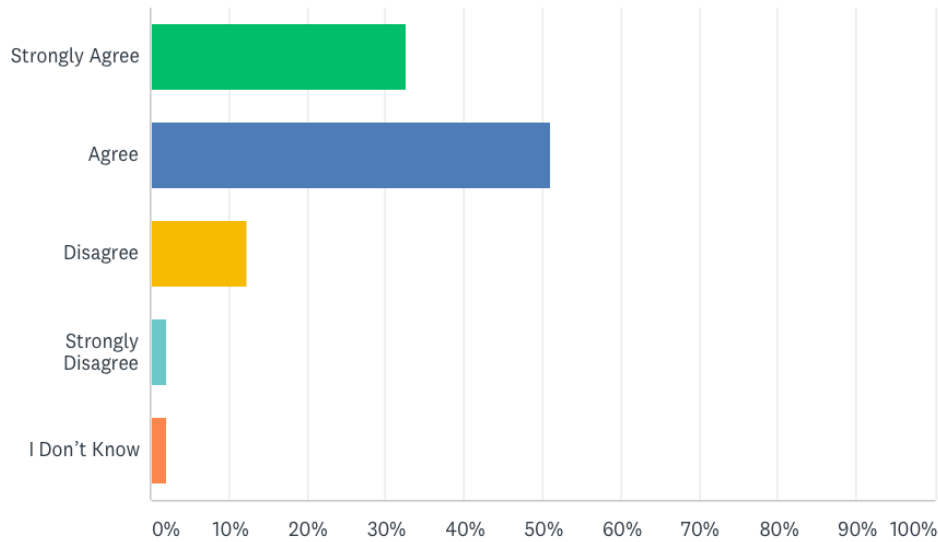
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	32.99%	32
Agree	40.21%	39
Disagree	22.68%	22
Strongly Disagree	2.06%	2
I Don't Know	2.06%	2
TOTAL		97

Q40



My church collaborates with other churches and para-church organizations to broaden its capacity to serve.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



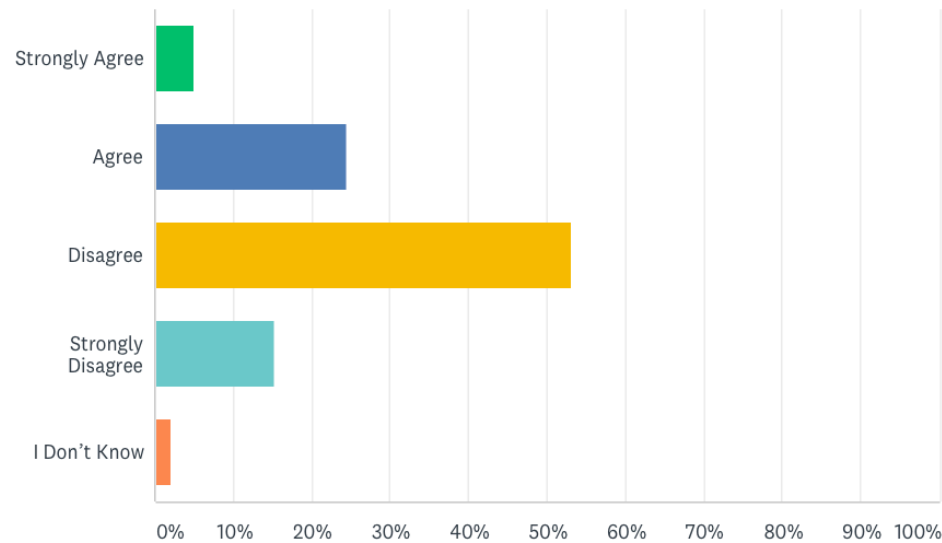
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	32.65%	32
Agree	51.02%	50
Disagree	12.24%	12
Strongly Disagree	2.04%	2
I Don't Know	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q41



My church seldom if ever engages in service projects that do not originate from church leadership or membership.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



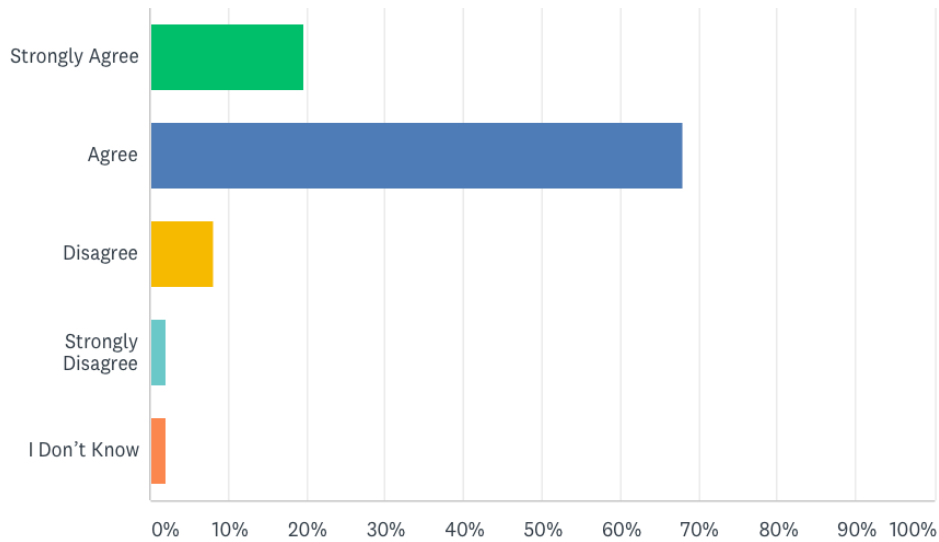
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	5.10%	5
Agree	24.49%	24
Disagree	53.06%	52
Strongly Disagree	15.31%	15
I Don't Know	2.04%	2
TOTAL		98

Q42



My church intentionally celebrates and promotes our service project accomplishments.

Answered: 97 Skipped: 4



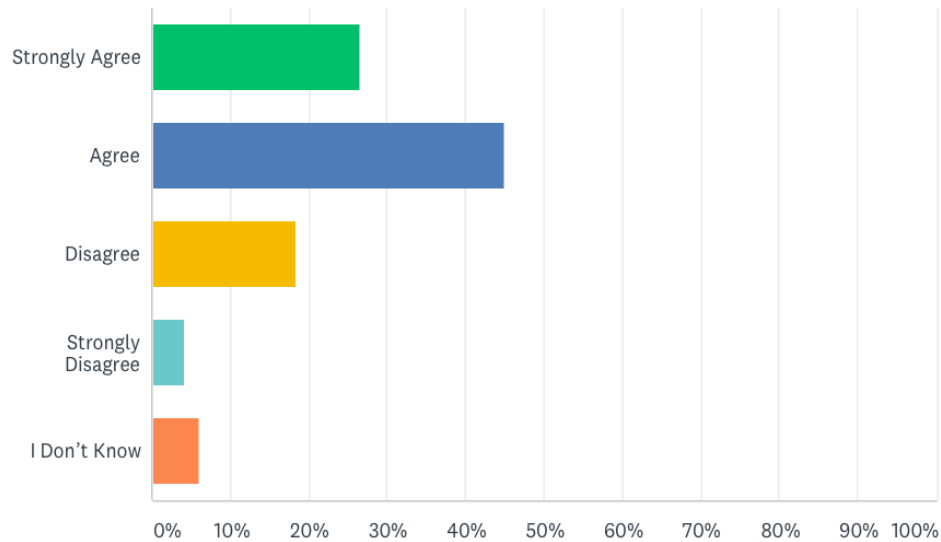
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	19.59%	19
Agree	68.04%	66
Disagree	8.25%	8
Strongly Disagree	2.06%	2
I Don't Know	2.06%	2
TOTAL		97

Q43



My church is known throughout the community for making significant contributions to service projects.

Answered: 98 Skipped: 3



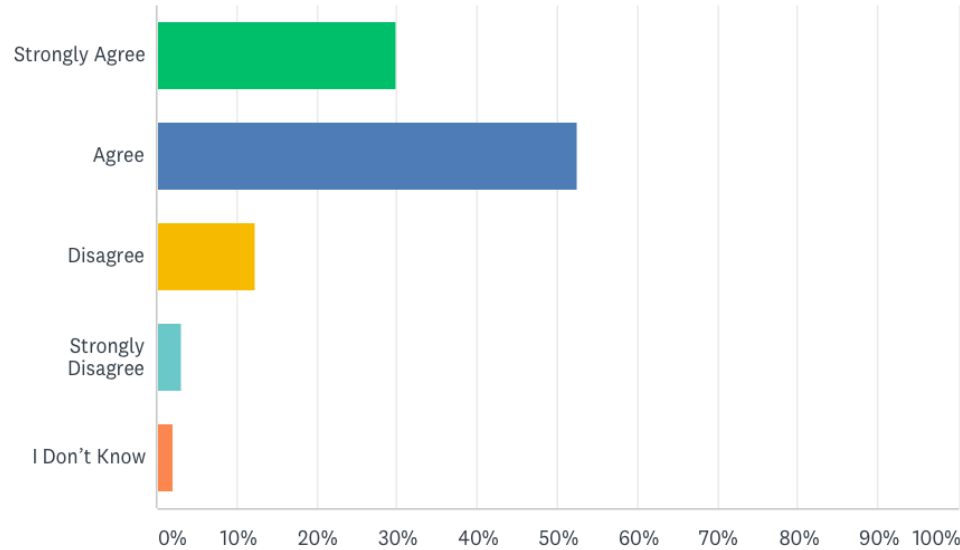
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	26.53%	26
Agree	44.90%	44
Disagree	18.37%	18
Strongly Disagree	4.08%	4
I Don't Know	6.12%	6
TOTAL		98

Q44



My church works to diminish the impact of poverty.

Answered: 97 Skipped: 4



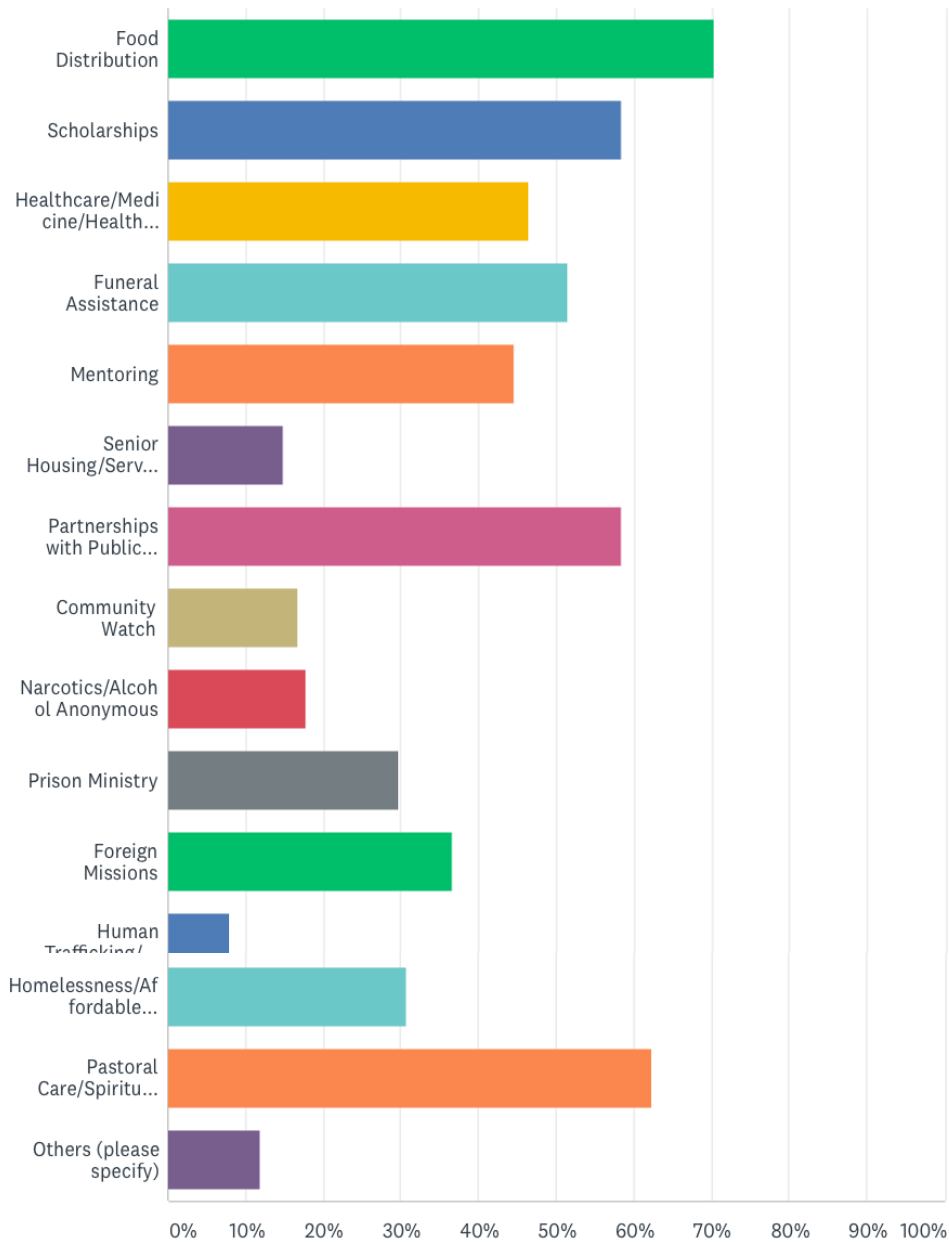
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	29.90%	29
Agree	52.58%	51
Disagree	12.37%	12
Strongly Disagree	3.09%	3
I Don't Know	2.06%	2
TOTAL		97

Q45



As a service delivery agency in the African American community, which areas of service does your church contribute to directly? (Select All That Apply)

Answered: 101 Skipped: 0



APPENDIX E

SPRINGFIELD POST-SEMINAR EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE WITH RESPONSES

1. What conditions do you recall made it necessary for the pastor and leadership team to develop core values in the Spring of 2013?

We were in period of exponential growth and one of the challenges was remaining central to who were as a church. An identity crisis of sorts and the core values were developed to effectively communicate who we were.

Church growth was so explosive that it presented some identity challenges. And as a way to ensure that the church didn't do that, the need for core values arose. Core values would ensure that everyone was speaking the same language and going in the same direction

Due to the tremendous growth of the church we felt it was time to create a standard or direction for the church.

We were experiencing rapid change within ministry, particularly after the move to the new church location. God was calling us to expand our outreach to new territories to respond to the needs of the church and surrounding community.

The ministry was growing at a very fast pace with people joining from all over and the need for a united message that identified who we are as a ministry was before us.

The church is growing and evolving. In order to be responsive to the identified Mission and Vision of Springfield Baptist Church, it was necessary to identify the core values as a definition of who we are as an organization to ourselves and others. Community involvement and relevance to the multiple generations present in the congregation drove this need to identify who we are.

Our church had continue to experience a great deal of growth. Some questioned if we were the old Springfield Baptist Church some members had grown up in as children. Some wondered if we were the church our Pastor had began to lead nearly 14 years before. WE felt it necessary to ask who were we and who we were being led to be. WE needed to be intentional about our values.

During the spring of 2013, the church was experiencing phenomenal growth. The Pastor and the Board of Directors found it necessary to implement a plan to move the church forward.

Growth has been experienced from the time Pastor Lee was installed in 1999. Proclaiming and Explaining the Gospel of Jesus Christ was used to identify Springfield. The growth seen after the move to a new building in 2012 prompted the new to develop core values that aligned with the growth being experienced.

Springfield had out grown two buildings and we were not the church that could convey the vision from one person to another via a intimate one on one conversation. SBC had more petitioners and needed a defining set of Core Values that could serve as a universal discription of who we were.

As the church body expanded and because we were in the process of purchasing the current sanctuary, developing the core values of G.R.O.W.T.H. helped to symbolize our "growth" as a congregation and as a ministry.

Th physical growth of the ministry lead us to develop core values. It gave us identity and we were able to communicate what the ministry was about and who we were.

2. As part of the leadership team, what was the rationale used in creating the core values in 2013?

Simplicity, Consistency and Relatability

To provide Simplicity, Continuity, and structure to the overall goal and vision of the church

We used the same model that was established in the creation of the church in Acts 2.

Leadership and the congregation needed to be on one accord with a set of core values. There was a need for a united front and focus. Members needed to be equipped to readily give an answer to whom SBC was and its purpose. Core values would provide ministries with a more strategic focus aligned with these values.

We discussed presenting a message which would assist the ministry with a reflection of who we are and what we believe in a manner that was clear, concise, duplicatable and simplistic.

Growth is the acronym and is also the defining action which we individually and corporately must do. We must grow or otherwise we are not alive.

We decided that Cabinet leaders and the senior staff would spend time dealing with this weighty issue. They crafted a draft document that the Executive Board and Pastor could review and comment on. Then after several iterations, the Ministry Leaders were brought on board for input. After that the Executive Board approved a document for presentation to the membership for comment. Finally, our core values document was approved and branding could begin.

The leadership team evaluated the state of the church based on continued growth and felt that there was a need to put in place a plan to address the need for more staff, security, transportation, equipment and giving.

The acronym GROWTH was in line with the values that Springfield embodied. G - Growing through God's word R - Reconnecting generations O - Operating in our spiritual gifts W - Winning the community T - Tithing in love & obedience to our God H - Helping to empower the world

Our Senior Pastor Eric W. Lee didn't operate in isolation but rather invited leadership to partake in the creation of the SBC Core Values that would articulate who we were and give direction as a church going forward.

I remember when the passage of scripture was quoted from Pastor, Jesus asks His disciples "who do 'you' say that I am?" was one of the primary inspirations for us developing core values in order to identify who we are as a church.

We wanted to create identity and develop a brand that would help us identify our core beliefs.

3. Since the adoption of the core values in 2013, what has been the three greatest benefits to SBC? (Place in order of greatest benefit.)

1. Clear Direction 2. Clear Identity 3. Focus

It made clear our identity. It provide structure. And it provides direction.

Direction, Consistency, Continuity

1. Congregation has a sense of unity and purpose.
2. Congregation learned the values together which was motivating and inspiring. Members from Childrens' Ministry to the seniors ministry participated in learning the values and can still repeat each one.
3. Ministerial program activities are aligned with the values.

* One Corporate Focus

* One model to clearly communicate the direction of the ministry

* Focused Model to align all calendar initiatives

1. Christian education - members and the staff are being educated in the Word
2. Reaching out to the community - having an impact by presence and contribution of resources
3. Biblical world view - we are more than Conyers, the state of GA, or even the USA. We are here to impact the world.

1. SBC's leaders and members know who we say we are as a church. WE rally around these values.
2. Programs and budgets must align with these values.
3. We hold ourselves accountable to these values. We want others outside of our church to do the same.

Since the adoption of our core values the three benefits have been:

1. Growing through Gods word
2. Winning the community
3. Tithing in love and obedience to our God

1)G - Growing through God's word -increase in membership as a result of God's word going forth in powerful worship service messages, increased small bible study class participation

2)T - Increase in tithes and offerings

3)R - Reconnecting generations - engaged youth and senior ministries

Our Core Values has Benefited us to Have continuity, collaborate and create a annual calendar. Core values allows SBC to be effective In planning ministry and serve the Membership and Community.

The three greatest benefits to SBC are identity, direction, and focus. Once we know who we are as a church body, our direction and focus becomes more clear.

1. The growth of our membership spiritually. We centered everything we do around growing through God's word and I feel this has allowed our membership to transform their lives through God's word. People are growing spiritually and you can see the growth manifest itself in their daily lives.
2. Winning and working in our local communities. It is great to be a blessing to the people that make up the ministry and to serve this community.
3. Watching members operate in their gifts . It is so rewarding to watch our members work in areas they were destined to work. It gives them a sense of purpose. It is fulfilling and people enjoy serving.

4. Do you believe SBC's ministries and leaders have more continuity as a result of implementing the core values? If yes, please provide examples.

Yes, all ministry starts with our core values. If it doesn't it's not part of our sanctioned church ministries.

Yes. Everything that is done at SBC has to fall within our core values.

Yes, with the core values we are moving the same direction.

Yes, I have been a part of planning meetings where leaders intentionally consider which of the core values the program or service aligns with. For example, the Young Adult Ministry has a college care package ministry to connect with the teens. Such connection correlates with the "R" in the core values (GROWTH) which is "Reconnecting the generations." Also, GROWTH University was birthed from the "G" in GROWTH which stands for "growing in God's word."

Yes

When deciding ministry events and initiatives leaders and ministries use the Core Values to align and decide if it's a good fit for SBC

Yes. The ministries are reading from the same page. There is a filter to gauge current activity and future projects. If it does not fit G.R.O.W.T.H., why are we doing it? This also adds organizational infrastructure for ministry and administration.

1. Our first pillar in our core values is " Growing Through God's Word". All our ministries are more intentional about making the study of God's Word a key, no matter what the ministry. 2.Helping to Empower the World is our last core value. All of our ministry members pull together to make our Outreach Ministry a success.The effectiveness and great success of this Ministry is due to its leadership and we all rally around this value.

Yes. SBC's ministries and leaders have more continuity because there is an annual calendar for the church, no duplication of program and services.

Special Groups:

Woven, DOH, Team church and Covenant Nation.

Yes, G - Growing through God's word - GROWTH U as a vehicle for development of bible study small group classes, VBS, college level certificate program through ITC (Interdenominational Theological Center) in Atlanta.

Yes, we have greater continuity do to we have Core Values to use to solidify our planning to assure we are on one accord.

Yes. Once the core values were implemented, all ministry leaders were directed and expected to begin meetings and events with acknowledging them and expounding on them. By doing this, we felt everyone would and should remain focused on who we are.

Yes...there is more continuity as a result of the core values. I see teams of leaders coordinating their activities, roles, responsibilities so the ministry work seamless. There are weekly meetings to coordinate efforts and develop strategies to help the ministry grow.

5. Do you believe SBC's ministries and leaders are more collaborative as a result of implementing the core values? If yes, please provide examples.

No, I believe more collaboration was a result of intentionality of 4' C's in cabinet. Cabinet and ELT evolution.

Yes. Ministries are intentional about reaching out to each other with their different events. Youth Ministry connects with the senior ministry and outreach ministries.

I believe there was collaboration before, however, the core values allow for more purposeful and directed collaboration.

Yes, as stated above ministries have found ways to connect generations as a result of the values. Also, ministries collaborate through their participation in the food pantry which is "Winning the community." Other examples are the ministry fair and church, Cook out which unite ministries in a fun, laid back and interactive atmosphere.

Yes

The Core Values push ministries and leaders to reach outside of their circle and connect generations as well as coordinate ministry ideas that point back to the Core Values.

Yes. The multiple generations being acknowledged in worship and practice is one of the most noticeable impacts. There have been more ministry fairs where there is outreach to members and the ministries had to collaborate for that to happen. Also the Connection cookout/picnic came to be in the time frame of GROWTH and the core values.

1. Our Harvest Of Blessings celebration accommodates nearly 1500 kids and adults. Our Outreach Ministry depends on the collaboration and support of all our ministries to make this happen. 2. Our Senior Ministry (55+) hosts a spaghetti luncheon and invites all our Joshua Generation/Teens free of charge, in support of our Reconnecting Generations value.

Yes. Core values provide an opportunity for ministries and leaders to work together through servolution, food distribution, Sunday school, Wednesday night worship service, New member orientation.

Yes, Leaders are able to see how events/activities fit in building Springfield as a part of God's kingdom.

Yes, we collaborate more because the core values challenge us to work with one another verses in isolation.

Yes; each department within the Church's cabinet implements the core values.

Leaders rely on each other daily to be successful. Collaboration improves ministry. A good example is the Deacons collaborate with our baptism team monthly to coordinate baptisms. The baptism pool must be prepared and heated so that ministers can be ready for baptisms. This could be a major problem if the two teams did not collaborate prior to Sunday baptism.

6. Do you believe that communication has improved throughout SBC's ministries and leaders since implementing core values? If yes, please provide examples.

Yes, we should all the same message.

Yes I do. The ministry cabinet connects their leaders and also with other church departments

Yes. There is minimal communication that can be a distraction to ministry results. The core values provide road map to meaningful communication.

Yes, ministries speak the "core value language." It has become second nature to mention the values in casual conversation and in planning processes. One example, is the core values are communicated within all marketing materials, media outlets, and correspondence materials. In conversation with fellow members and leaders we communicate in pre-planning with the core values in mind. Such unity of thought helps focus the communication and outcomes.

Yes

When faced with making a decision as to whether or not to move forward with a ministry idea the Core Values drive leaders to communicate with one another to assure we're all on one accord with the intent of the idea and to make sure it falls under the umbrella of the Core Values.

Yes. Communication has been intentional and there have been different avenues of communication. Technology has aided this intention to communicate. The City and now Realm are platforms for ministry and administration to communicate. The presence of social media as well as streaming services has increased.

We all speak the same language about who we are and what we are about. Reactivating a children choir was important because we needed to "Reconnect Generations". The communications about this need was well received. We are contemplating relocating our Children Church to a facility contiguous to our main sanctuary to make connecting with them in worship easier. We have more consistently emphasized and communicated the need for tithing by leaders because it is the right thing for them to do and also because it is one of our agreed upon core values.

Yes. Communication has improved through ministries and leaders. An annual calendar is provided at the beginning of the year, Realm, media announcements, pulpit announcements from Pastor and other ministers.

Yes, Ministries collaborate on events that are beneficial to the entire body vs. one specific part. Example shown in programs given by men or women ministries that are beneficial to both - health (physical/mental) or budgeting.

Yes, Communication is much better via personal one on one or through the use of technology. Weekly meetings that bring different ideas to the table but one set of guidelines to check and balance our efforts off of is useful.

Somewhat.

I believe communications among departments has majorly improved. Leaders know that they must involve other leaders and discuss ideas before fully implementing something. This allows us not to duplicate efforts or step on the toes of others as we are developing strategically. Communication plays a vital role in what we do and our core values help us to improve communications.

7. Explain how the core values of SBC impact/influence the annual calendar of events and ministry programming.

Everything on our calendar should involve one or more of the core values.

Each calendar event should be done within at least one of the core values

Every event, internal or outside, is allowed and scheduled with the core values in mind as is every ministry, existing or newly formed.

The annual calendar of events and ministry programming are evaluated based on whether or not all core values are impacted throughout the year. Again, ministry leaders are trained to ask if the proposed programming meets at least one of the core values.

Everything planned has to point back to the Core Values. If it's not aligned with the Core Values of GROWTH then its not considered.

With GROWTH, there have been events which are the results of each letter:
GROWTH U - Christian Education and small group concepts
Ordination of ministers and deacons
Vision Night - communication of the direction of the church - ministerial and financial
Servolution

Activities are planned not because it is a particular month or an annual event. The relevance and impact go into the development of events. There are no "sacred cows" regarding annual events.

Events are scheduled only if they align with one or more of our values. Ministry leaders know their request for funds or other resources will be prioritize or approved based on their lining up with our values.

The core values provide information that impact and influence the annual calendar through the Assimilation ministry, events and hospitality, Joshua Generation, music worship and arts, outreach, Growth University and servolution.

Bible classes to grow through God's word are coordinated. Programs for children, youth and seniors are done to reconnect generations. Ministry opportunities exist for member to volunteer throughout church.

The core values assist SBC in prioritizing the why weâ€™re doing what we do or planning particular ministry events. The core values helps us to minimize duplication of ministry events and forge ministries to collaborate!

Anything on the calendar is related to one or more of the core values.

The core values influences everything we do strategically at SBC. All our events and ministry programming is centered around GROWTH. An event can not be considered if the core values aren't considered. We will never work against our core values or support programming that goes against our core values.

8. Explain how the core values of SBC impact/influence developing job descriptions and budgeting in general.

We develop job descriptions based upon ministry needs and funds budgeted according to core value needs.

Job descriptions allow us to hire according the core values and every dollar that is allocated for ministries should fall into the core values

Core values provide a standard by which every job description is made. This allows us to seek out and hire those individuals that we think would succeed in those values. Every item that budgeted for funds are funded through the lenses of the core values.

As the ministry has grown to reflect the core values, it has impacted job descriptions and budgets. Since implementation of the values, SBC has hired full time ministry leaders to serve as pastors over ministries. A full time event planner was also added to accommodate growth. These changes have increased the budget in the area of salaries. The budget also increased to accommodate programming which reflects the values such as the food pantry, scholarships, monetary donations to community organizations, and investment in social media enhancements.

* The Job descriptions are developed in a way which expresses how an individual's character is expected to line up with and be receptive of the ministries Core Values.

* All ministry money assigned has to be able to point back and connect to the Core Values. On the ministry proposed budget submissions each ministry is asked "Which letter or letters in the Core Values does this request support"

The annual budget is driven by initiatives where the church is blessed within and without. The budget is not dedicated to buildings and utilities. Nonprofits have been the beneficiaries. Within the staff, there has been growth by development of staff persons, lay and clergy.

All job descriptions are expected to demonstrate how this job lines up with our values. New employees are told of our values and of their importance. During the budgeting cycle ministry leaders, and Cabinet Leaders know their request for funds will be judged based on how they support one or more of our values. During our monthly budget reviews, spending and projected spending is reviewed in light of these values.

Each core value has specific goals. When job descriptions are developed the requirements are written with the goals of the position and educational qualifications, training and experience needed to perform in the position successfully. The budget provide a competitive salary for the qualified candidate.

Interviews of applicants are inline with the core values, while leaders should have an understanding of the core values. Leaders are not stifled in requesting items for events that may be an increase in budgets from previous years.

The SBC Core Values assist in developing job descriptions it gives clarity of the expectations of the employees. The core values also allows you to Budget accordingly and be better Stuart's of the proceeds given to do ministry.

As a staff, we try to ensure that all prospective employees directly align with our core values prior to offering employment. Our budgeting must also reflect these values to avoid frivolous spending.

Any job we develop has to align with the core values and help us grow strategically. All responsibilities are strategically reviewed and they must be developed to carry out specific assignments centered around GROWTH. The core values helps us finalize budgets. We will not spend funds on projects that do not center around GROWTH.

9. How do the SBC core values impact/influence Springfield's service and outreach to the larger community?

It increased strategic focus and engagement in the community at large. Winning The Community

It ensures that we stay true to who we are as a church and not do anything for any other reason other than that.

By investing our time and resources to those endeavors that are in line with our core values we affect change in our community.

The "W" in GROWTH, is "Winning the community." This is one of the most visible and far reaching core values of influence. SBC's Outreach Ministry provides over 100 tons of food each year which includes a monthly food pantry. This ministry has also added \$15,000 in annual college scholarships for local students. The Transitional Prison Ministry and Street Evangelism ministry are also strong ministries under the Outreach Ministry.

The "H" in the Core Values which stands for "Helping to Empower the World" pushes the ministry to always seek out and connect with opportunities to reach outside the 4 walls and assist those in need in the community and beyond.

The core values allow for ministries to be deliberate in evangelism to get the word in deed and resource. The community is reached by the Springfield Christian Academy, Transitional Prison Ministry, Food Pantry, and other resources. The community is impacted whether the community comes to the church or the church goes to the community. Both are done.

Helping to Empower Our World is a value that leads us outside of our walls. Our Food Pantry program is very well supported because it rest on this key value. Our Senior Ministry reaches out to local nursing homes, rehabilitation centers and hospitals in support of this value. Our Prison Transition Team is also based on our dedication to this value. Our involvement in our local schools is based on this value.

SBC impact and influence the community by providing resources on health and wellness, jobs, housing, financial literacy, food and spiritual comfort though out the year. Street ministry, transition prison ministry and substance abuse ministry.

The food pantry feeds 500 or more families on a monthly basis. Outreach also ministers to those in transitional housing after being in a penal institution. The ministry also conducts evangelism on the streets of the local communities.

The SBC Core Values reminds us of our commitment to serve our community and the world. It reminds us of the great commission found in The Gospel according to Matthew as we are prompted to Evangelize, Feed, clothe, Empower our Members and Community with Resources.

One of our core values is "winning the community," so the range of our outreach is already a direct reflection of what we stand for as a Church.

The core values have a major impact on how we serve the larger community. We expect to transform our communities and the people within those communities. We pride ourselves on helping others and our values contribute to how we develop the activities to help others. We will not get involved in activities that do not fit one of our core values.

10. What has been the biggest difference in ministry and leadership at Springfield since the cultivation and implementation of core values?

Unified direction and facilitation of ministry.

Everyone has the same direction and are speaking the same language.

Everyone is following the same path in terms of ministry.

The biggest difference in ministry and leadership has been the concerted effort for members and leaders to rally behind common values with common purposes. It has created a synergy that is intangible. There is a sense of unity that has not waned since the values were adopted by SBC. It seems everyone understands we are committed to GROWTH both collectively and individually. This commitment translates into all areas of ministry.

The direction of the Ministry is clear and everyone is encouraged to not only know the Core Values but to also do their best to live them and share them with others.

There is a personal accountability with the implementation of the mission and vision of the church. Not only is the church as an organization up for the task, it has been identified how each person has a part to play and how individuals are recognized and encouraged for their part.

Since we have defined who we are and who we believe we are led to be, internal and external branding has been made easier. We now speak the same language about who we are. We agree we are about 'GROWTH', make no mistake. We can now train our leaders with core values in mind. Now we are asked to read books and to attend sessions that are tied to our values. I believe our values make us proud, they make us united.

The biggest difference in ministry and leadership at SBC since the cultivation and implementation of core values are:

1. Ministry and leadership working together collaborative

A greater connection as a body (family) working (serving) on a common goal in building the kingdom of God.

We are more unified, the quality of our ministry production is better do to planning and paralleling our efforts to the Core Values.

Our direction and focus is more geared toward a common goal.

The biggest difference has been the reconnecting of generations at Springfield. It is amazing to see four generations working together to get ministry accomplished.

11. What if any accomplishments since 2013 have been made in any or all of the pillars of the church (Worship, Fellowship, Christian Education, Stewardship, Evangelism or Service) that you believe would NOT have been possible without the core values?

Expansion of christian education to G.R.O.W.T.H. University, fellowship has increased, and stewardship with multiple ways of giving and serving.

Christian Education has gone to a higher level. And our service has been a tremendous blessing. Our fellowship has grown the church to be more family oriented.

An expanded sense of purpose in Christian Education. A more intentional effort of inclusion in terms of fellowship. A stronger, more directed, sense of service.

I believe the strength of the Outreach and Christian Education ministries would not have occurred without GROWTH. These ministries have exemplified the most core values all at once. Their most visible impact is the reconnection of generations and collaboration between ministries that occurs due to the strength of these ministries.

*The Fellowship has increased across the board as each ministry reaches outside of themselves to reconnect generations and to serve together.

*Christian Education has greatly increased as we have put forth more intentional focus on the "G" Growing through Gods Word.

*Stewardship has grown since its clear up front that we tithe out of love and obedience

*Service has increased as we have increased our efforts toward the "H" Helping to Empower the World

The concept of Servolution comes to my mind. There is service but the army corporate component of service takes it to another level. It is even more efficient and it blessed the worker as well as the recipient.

1.Our Covenant Nation Men's group tackled a reading of the Book of Revelation, because of the first pillar in our core values.2. We stepped out on Faith and purchased our facility. Our income level has increased almost every year because our members have practiced "Tithing in Love and Obedience", one of our values. We have not come close to missing a mortgage payment, even during our summer doldrums.

There have been many accomplishments made since 2013 through worship and fellowship. We have added a minister of music and arts, christian education, growth university, tithing and offering have continued to grow each year. I believe the pillars of the church will continue to grow.

Worship - increase in membership

Fellowship - invigorated children, youth, senior ministries

Christian Education - GROWTH U

Stewardship - increase in tithes/offerings

Evangelism/Service - Outreach food pantry

The G of our Core Values “Growing Through Gods Word” has encouraged us as a church to be intentional about studying the Bible.

The R in our Core Values “Reconnecting Generations through Worship and fellowship” has allowed 4 or five generations to worship together and cross pollinate with one another while encourage each other through this journey called life.

The W “Winning the Community Has afforded us to gain souls, people to enjoy the life found in Jesus.

Our H exemplifies Helping to empower the world and we’ve experience the ability to be a church that’s a true community resource. We have been afforded the opportunity to help storm ravaged countries and states, drinking water issues in Flint Michigan, provide groceries over 7,000 Families annually and provide benevolence to people in need!

Christian education has truly flourished as well as our fellowship. We are now "reconnecting generations."

Because of an increase in our tithing and giving, we have implemented new ways of giving to provide and even monitor people's weekly financial contributions.

There has been significant accomplishments done through the Christian Education ministry. Several curriculums have been developed to promote the "G" in GROWTH. They all align with the core values and have help members and leaders develop spiritually. Also, we have expanded the service side of our ministry too. Members are eager to take on responsibilities that will help serve others. The food drive is a great example of how we have taken service to new levels since the implementation of core values.

12. How do the core values enable leaders and members to evaluate the progress or lack of progress of the church?

Core values set a standard for leaders.

It serves as a standard for ministry.

Core values provide a standard by which we all evaluate our progress. It also allows for easier identification of where we are lacking for course correction.

The core values give the leaders and members a foundational blue print to evaluate how well the church is carrying out its mission through the ministry services. Ministries have the ability to measure progress based on how many and how well they are meeting one or more values. They can also assess opportunities to tap into values not yet fulfilled.

The Core Values serve as a clear and concise plumb line in which we are able to measure the success or lack thereof of everything we do. As we go through each letter we are able to ask ourselves just exactly what are we doing in each area to obtain the desired outcome expressed in each area. Such as "What are we doing to Grow in Gods Word"? "How are we Reconnecting Generations"? "Are we operating in our Spiritual Gifts"? "How are we Winning the community"? "Are we tithing out of love and obedience"? "What are we doing to Help empower the world"? We are able to look at the Church as a whole and see how the ministries, activities and classes line up to G.R.O.W.T.H.

Strategies and milestones are evaluated by way of metrics but also by the quality of the interactions. It is not just attendance and audits. Are lives changed through worship? Are generations learning from each other? Are members tithing as a debt we owe or a seed we sow? That is progress.

Each year a Vision Casting meeting is held. The previous years accomplishments and challenges are presented in light of our core values. Plans for next year and beyond are also presented. Members get to hear and comment on how these things line up with our values. We all are reminded of what they are and how what we are doing is in line with these values.

The core values provide information on the growth of the church through attendance, new member orientation, baby blessing, demographics, number of visitors, number of new ministries and programs, community outreach and stewardship.

The core values as outlined allow members to see on a personal level when action is taken. Members may not know specifics, but can see if church, classes or events have low participation.

The Core Values serves as a Barometer to gage the progress of our present moment in ministry, as well as our Core Values serve as a Compass to grant direction in what can be critiqued and casting vision as we move forward. Leadership and Members alike have a clear understanding do to the Core Values on if we are reaching the goal of each core value or we still have room for improvement.

Our core values serve as a brand, a standard, and an identification badge that every member of Springfield should possess no matter where they are in the world.

GROWTH is discussed in everything we do. Members are able to see the progress we make daily. We statistically measure the values and compare them from year to year. We analyze and set trends to make sure we are tracking the right elements to give us feedback on all our accomplishments. That information is shared with the congregation and their input helps us to improve.

13. What if anything would you change about the core values of SBC?

Nothing presently

Nothing

Nothing

I would possibly change the "H", which stands for "Helping to empower the world." It is possibly the area with the most opportunity for development and implementation. It is similar to the "W" in GROWTH which may create confusion in the church's ability to more effectively carry it out.

I wouldn't change anything

I would not change them.

I would NOT presently change our values. They are who we are.

I would not make any changes to the core values at this time.

Nothing

I wouldn't change anything about the Core Values at the present time but would set time aside to evaluate critiquing them as we evolve as a Church.

I don't wish to change anything.

I would not change anything.

14. I believe that the core values of Springfield Baptist Church need to be updated periodically for clarity and content. (One Answer Only)

Agree On Both Clarity & Content

Neither Clarity Or Content

Neither Clarity Or Content

Agree On Both Clarity & Content

Agree On Content Only - NOT Clarity

Agree On Both Clarity & Content

Agree On Clarity Only - NOT Content

Agree On Both Clarity & Content

Neither Clarity Or Content

Agree On Both Clarity & Content

Neither Clarity Or Content

Agree On Content Only - NOT Clarity

15. Do you believe that the core values of Springfield Baptist Church will survive and sustain the direction of the church well beyond your tenure and lifetime? Please give support for your answer.

Yes with revisions and consistent leadership development

Yes, because the core values are rooted in the word of the God.

Yes, as long as we are intentional in speaking, teaching and modeling them to the generations that follow.

I believe the values will sustain the tenure and lifetime of the church, because they are all encompassing and far reaching. The values may require a relaunching in the next five years along with a fresh perspective or initiative. The goal is to keep the values fresh without them becoming cliché or religious jargon.

Yes I do believe they will out last my tenure and lifetime. Each letter is rooted and grounded in the Word of God which stands for all eternity.

I know the core values will survive beyond my tenure. I believe the core values will survive my lifetime because of the commitment to communicate it to the next generation.

I believe these values represent who we are as a church. I believe they are God given and Bible based. I would periodically review for clarity but not periodically update for content. We developed these values based on what was contained in Acts 2. Unless Acts 2 changes, or the Lord returns, I would not change their content.

Yes. I believe the core value will survive and sustain the direction of the church for many years to come. Programs that involve various population of the church are Disciples of Hope, Covenant Nation, Intercessory Prayer, Alter Ministry, Outreach Ministry, trained and qualified leadership.

Yes, I think core values will survive, but as the years may retooling in the future.

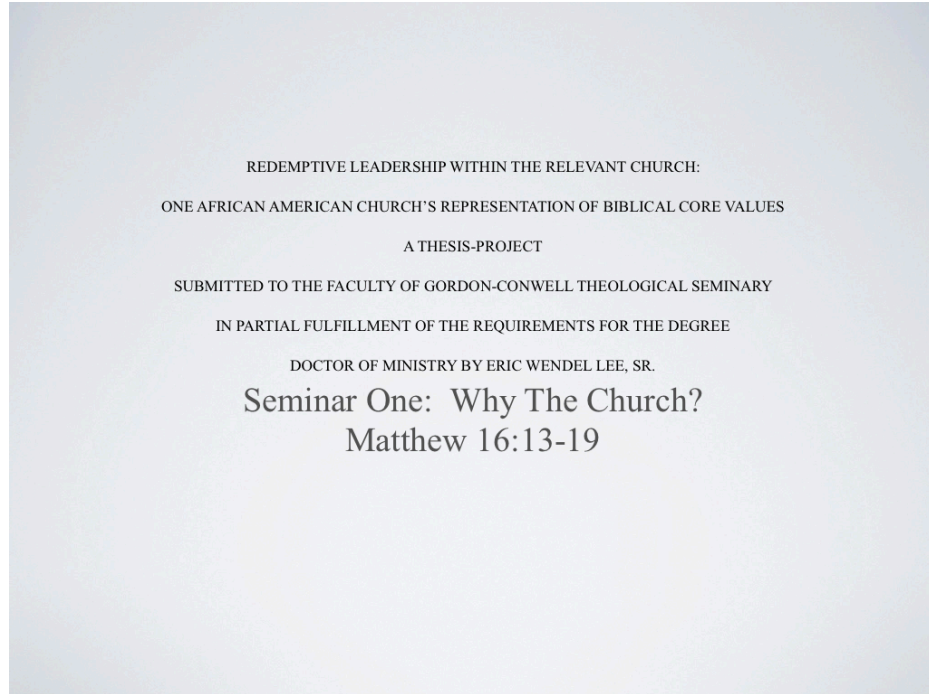
Yes, I believe the Core Values will survive and sustain the tenure of the church because at the Core of our existence as a church these basic fundamental values are who Springfield Baptist Church will always be. We will forever look to Gods Word for directions, always love on one another as Christ has loved us, we will make time to share corporate worship, Encourage people to seek out their spiritual gifts and operate in them, forever seek to win the community through Evangelism for Jesus, Encourage tithing in order to pay the cost associated with Helping to empower our world through inreach and outreach.

Yes. The core values were directly inspired by God's word, which is unchanging. Therefore, I believe these values will stand the test of time even beyond my lifetime.

I do believe the core values will sustain the ministry past my tenure. The values are solid and pertains to every person that will do ministry in years to come. I think we chose six great pillars that will stand the test of time. We will always have something to do to continue with the GROWTH at Springfield.

APPENDIX F

SEMINAR ONE PRESENTATION: WHY THE CHURCH?



INTRODUCTIONS

- Your Name
- Your Ministry
- Your Tenure As A Leader In The Church
- Your Greatest Hope For Your Church

The image shows six name tags arranged in a 3x2 grid. Each tag has a colored header with the word 'HELLO' and 'my name is' in small text. The body of each tag is white and blank for writing. The colors of the headers are green, red, orange, blue, purple, and pink.

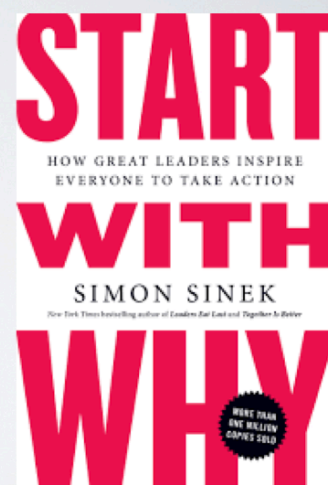
MATTHEW 16:13-19

- Who are the disciples?
The People of ministry.
- Where is Caesarea
Philippi? The Place of
ministry.
- Why is the church
necessary? The
Purpose of ministry.



STARTING WITH WHY?

- What do the following people and companies have in common? The Wright Brothers, The Apple Corporation, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “There are only two ways to influence human behavior: you can manipulate it or you can inspire it.”
- What is the “Why” of the Christian Church?



THE PLAN OF MINISTRY

- Inspired Leadership
- Redemptive Leadership
- Equipped Leadership

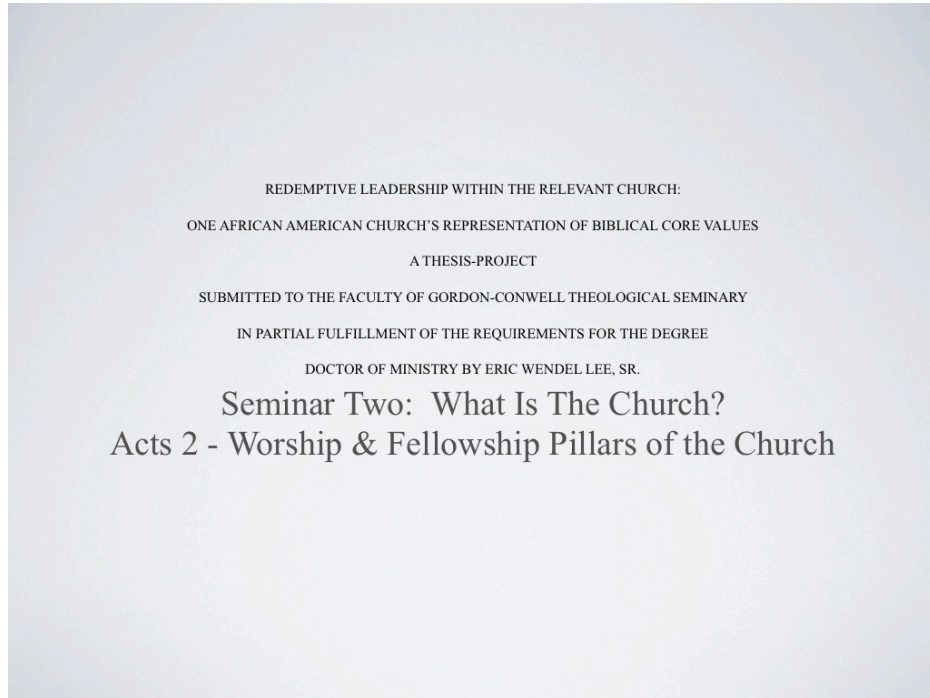


CONCLUDING DIALOGUE

1. What does it mean to be the “rock” of the church?
 2. What things in our culture or our church have emerged as competitors with Christ as the center of the church?
 3. How well does your church represent and present Christ to its community?
 4. What should the church be doing to more accurately represent Christ? Why?
- Peter proclaimed the “why” of the church, it then qualified him to participate in the establishment of “what” the church does in Acts 2 in Seminar Two.

APPENDIX G

SEMINAR TWO PRESENTATION: WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP PILLARS



WHAT IS WORSHIP?

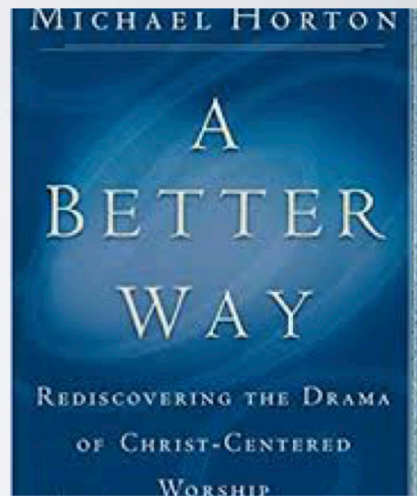
Worship is - “the celebratory praise and adoration of God the creator, one of its key tasks is to tell in a thousand different ways, the story of creation and new creation.”

“You become what you worship”!

The book cover for 'SIMPLY CHRISTIAN' features a black and white photograph of a long, straight road with a white picket fence on the left, receding into the distance. The title 'SIMPLY CHRISTIAN' is in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below it is a small cross symbol, and at the bottom, the subtitle 'Why Christianity Makes Sense' is written in a smaller font. A quote from Anne Rice is visible at the top of the cover: 'This will become a classic.' —ANNE RICE, author of Christ the Lord and Out of Egypt.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

- Worship (is) a covenant renewal ceremony in which God summons us and acts in word and deed for our good is to recognize that how we worship (the second commandment) is as much God's prerogative to define as whom we worship (the first commandment).
- Vagueness about the object of our praise inevitably leads to making our own praise the object. Praise therefore becomes an end in itself, and we are caught up in our own "worship experience" rather than in the God whose character and acts are the only proper focus.
- God has promised to save and keep his people through the means he has appointed and through no others; the ordinary means of grace are limited to the preached Word and the administered sacraments; God's rationale for these means is made explicit in Scripture.



OLD TESTAMENT WORSHIP PSALM 124

- HIGHER - A Song of Ascent
- HARMONY - Verses 1-2
- HERITAGE - Verses 3-7 - Retelling of History
- HOPE - Verses 6-8 - Future Deliverance

NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

ACTS 2:1-21; ACTS 2:42;46

- HIGHER - Upper Room
- HARMONY - One Accord - One Understanding
- Acts 2:42;46
- HERITAGE - Prophet Joel
- HOPE - Acts 2:21 - Salvation

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

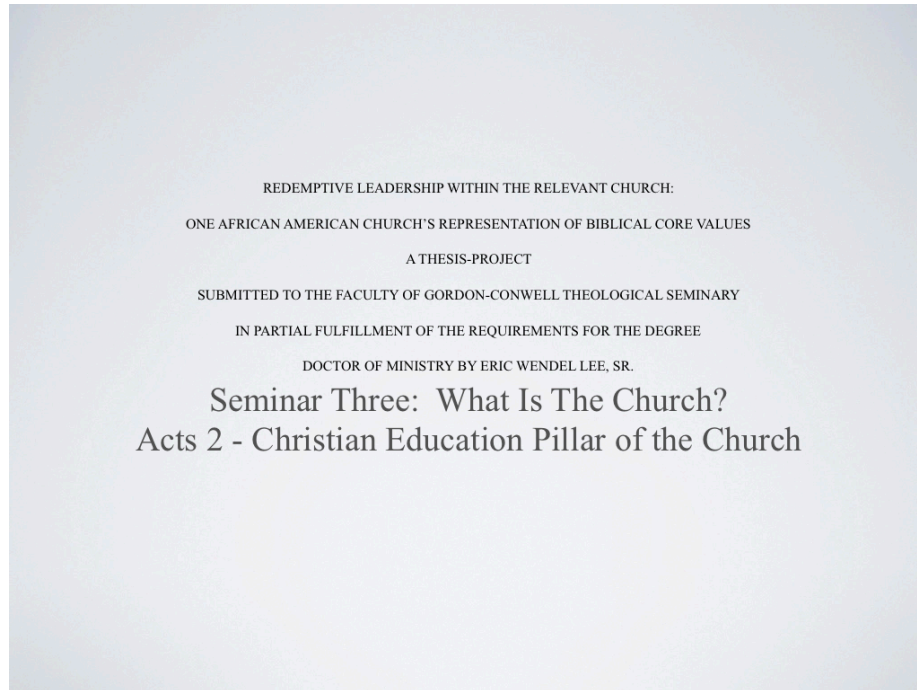
1. My church is intentional about conducting regular seasonal and annual fellowship-centered events that promote intergenerational interaction?
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree. E. I Don't Know.
 2. Our worship regularly incorporates opportunities for multiple generational participation (nursery, children's church, teen church, young adults and seniors). A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree. E. I Don't Know.
 3. My church features recreational ministries, fitness groups and team sports offerings for church membership.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree. E. I Don't Know.
 4. My church encourages membership interaction through digital means such as social media and live streaming.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree. E. I Don't Know.
 5. Our church professes the connection between believing (faith) and belonging (fellowship).
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree. E. I Don't Know.
 6. How often does your church offer the sacraments (Baptism & the Lord's Supper).
A. 1-4 per year B. 5-10 per year C. 11-15 per year D. As needed. E. As Needed
- Concluding Consideration: Imagine how functional or dysfunctional church would be without God centered worship.

COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS TO 100 PASTORS

- 1. A. 38% Strongly Agree B. 43% Agree C. 15% Disagree D. 4% Strongly Disagree E. 0% I Don't Know
- 2. A. 38% Strongly Agree B. 43% Agree C. 15% Disagree D. 4% Strongly Disagree E. 0% I Don't Know
- 3. A. 15% Strongly Agree B. 29% Agree C. 47% Disagree D. 9% Strongly Disagree E. 0% I Don't Know
- 4. A. 39% Strongly Agree B. 41% Agree C. 17% Disagree D. 3% Strongly Disagree E. 0% I Don't Know
- 5. A. 54% Strongly Agree B. 38% Agree C. 7% Disagree D. 1% Strongly Disagree E. 0% I Don't Know
- 6. A. 4% 1-4 times per year B. 2% 5-10 times per year C. 81% 11-15 times per year D. 10% As Needed E. 3% I Don't Know

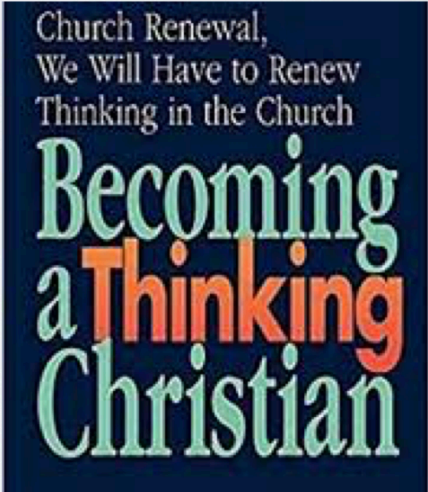
APPENDIX H

SEMINAR THREE PRESENTATION: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PILLAR



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- “become aware of the beliefs by which you live and think about them”
- “become aware that (everyone) you are already a theologian”
- “To be a good theologian is to be a Christian who thinks.”



THE NEED FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- Three out of Ten Americans are Practicing Christians (Good Faith - Kinnaman & Lyons)
- Three in Five American Christians are Nominal or Inactive Christians (Good Faith - Kinnaman & Lyons)
- Almost nine out of 10 households (87 percent) own a Bible, according to the American Bible Society, and the average household has three. About half of Americans (53 percent) have read relatively little of the Bible. <https://lifewayresearch.com/2017/04/25/lifeway-research-americans-are-fond-of-the-bible-dont-actually-read-it/>
- Only 20% of Americans have read through the entire Bible at least once. <https://lifewayresearch.com/2017/04/25/lifeway-research-americans-are-fond-of-the-bible-dont-actually-read-it/>
- Ephesians 4:11-16 - (14)Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- Proverbs 4:7 - The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have,³⁰ get understanding.
- Luke 2:47 - Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.
- Matthew 4:23 - Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.
- Mark 4:2 - He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables
- Acts 2:13 - But others mocked them and said, "They are drunk on new wine!"

THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - ACTS 2:14-41

- Joel 2:28-32
- Psalm 16:8-11
- Discipleship - John 6: 1-14
- DYK? Most Americans Reject Resurrection Of The Body <https://www.christianpost.com/news/poll-most-americans-reject-resurrection-of-the-body-7879/>

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

1. My church's Christian Education department provides practical theology for practicing Christians.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

2. My church's Christian Education department provides education for at least 4 generations.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

3. Christian Education participation is a clear expectation for the entire church.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

4. Christian Education participation is expected and enforced for church leadership.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

5. My church has a well defined, strategic Christian Education statement of purpose, slogan or scripture.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

6. My church's Christian Education department addresses the crisis of biblical illiteracy.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree E. I Don't Know

Concluding Consideration: Imagine how functional or dysfunctional church would be without fellowship.

•

COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS TO 100 PASTORS

- 1. My church's Christian Education department provides practical theology for practicing Christians. A. 41% Strongly Agree B. 51% Agree C. 8% Disagree D. 1% Strongly Disagree E. 0% I Don't Know
- 2. My church's Christian Education department provides education for at least 4 generations. A. 28% Strongly Agree B. 45% Agree C. 24% Disagree D. 3% Strongly Disagree E. 0% I Don't Know
- 3. Christian Education participation is a clear expectation for the entire church. A. 47% Strongly Agree B. 39% Agree C. 13% Disagree D. 0% Strongly Disagree E. 1% I Don't Know
- 4. Christian Education participation is expected and enforced for church leadership. A. 27% Strongly Agree B. 52% Agree C. 18% Disagree D. 2% Strongly Disagree E. 1% I Don't Know
- 5. My church has a well defined, strategic Christian Education statement of purpose, slogan or scripture. A. 22% Strongly Agree B. 47% Agree C. 26% Disagree D. 4% Strongly Disagree E. 1% I Don't Know
- 6. My church's Christian Education department addresses the crisis of biblical illiteracy. A. 27% Strongly Agree B. 52% Agree C. 18% Disagree D. 2% Strongly Disagree E. 1% I Don't Know

APPENDIX I

SEMINAR FOUR PRESENTATION: EVANGELISM & STEWARDSHIP PILLARS

REDEMPTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE RELEVANT CHURCH:
ONE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH'S REPRESENTATION OF BIBLICAL CORE VALUES
A THESIS-PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY BY ERIC WENDEL LEE, SR.

Seminar Four: What Is The Church?
Acts 2 - Evangelism & Stewardship Pillars of the Church

2014 CHURCH PARTICIPATION STATISTICS					
PEW RESEARCH CENTER - HTTPS://WWW.PEWFORUM.ORG/RELIGIOUS-LANDSCAPE-STUDY/ATTENDANCE-AT-RELIGIOUS-SERVICES/					
Religious tradition	At least once a week	Once or twice a month/a few times a year	Seldom/never	Don't know	Sample size
Buddhist	18%	50%	31%	< 1%	1,000
Catholic	39%	40%	20%	1%	1,000
Evangelical Protestant	58%	30%	12%	1%	1,000
Hindu	18%	60%	21%	1%	1,000
Historically Black Protestant	53%	36%	10%	1%	1,000
Jehovah's Witness	85%	11%	3%	1%	1,000
Jewish	19%	49%	31%	< 1%	1,000
Mainline Protestant	33%	43%	24%	1%	1,000
Mormon	77%	14%	9%	1%	1,000
Muslim	45%	31%	22%	1%	1,000
Orthodox Christian	31%	54%	15%	< 1%	1,000

INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

- Matthew 28:18-20 - The Great Commission: Make Disciples, Baptize Disciples & Teach Disciples
- Acts 2:44-47 - 3,000 Souls - 1% of 300,000 - Souls Added Daily
- Matthew 9:9-13 - The Value Of Forgiveness

BUILDING A CULTURE OF EVANGELISM

- Acts 8 - The African/
Ethiopian Church 330
AD - The European/
Roman Church 380
- The Legacy Of Lott
Carey - African Missions



The Rev. Lott Carey - 1780-1828

COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS TO 100 PASTORS

Evangelism

1. My church has an evangelism team that shares Christ with the general public.

A. Strongly Agree - 22% B. Agree - 36% C. Disagree - 34% D. Strongly Disagree - 5% E. I Don't Know - 0% 3% Did Not Answer

2. My church offers Christian Education courses about Biblical models of evangelism and contemporary approaches.

A. Strongly Agree - 14% B. Agree - 45% C. Disagree - 33% D. Strongly Disagree - 4% E. I Don't Know 1% - 3% Did Not Answer

3. My church has seasonal evangelism challenges for the entire membership.

A. Strongly Agree - 20% B. Agree - 49% C. Disagree - 25% D. Strongly Disagree - 1% E. I Don't Know 2% - 3% Did Not Answer

4. My church discourages evangelism that places individuals at personal risk.

A. Strongly Agree - 22% B. Agree - 32% C. Disagree - 32% D. Strongly Disagree - 7% E. I Don't Know - 4% - 3% Did Not Answer

5. My church places an intentional emphasis on evangelism to different ethnic groups beyond African Americans.

A. Strongly Agree - 23% B. Agree - 32% C. Disagree - 35% D. Strongly Disagree - 3% E. I Don't Know - 4% - 3% Did Not Answer

6. Our church is comfortable with its current size and is disinterested in evangelism.

A. Strongly Agree - 3% B. Agree - 6% C. Disagree - 40% D. Strongly Disagree - 47% E. I Don't Know - 1% - 3% Did Not Answer

7. Our church resists the commitment necessary to expand services or build new facilities to accommodate growth.

A. Strongly Agree - 3% B. Agree - 11% C. Disagree - 48% D. Strongly Disagree - 33% E. I Don't Know - 2% - 3% Did Not Answer

8. What percentage of your church's new members are new converts to Christianity?

A. Less than 10% - 56% of Pastors B. Less than 25% - 32% of Pastors C. Approximately 50% - 8% of Pastors

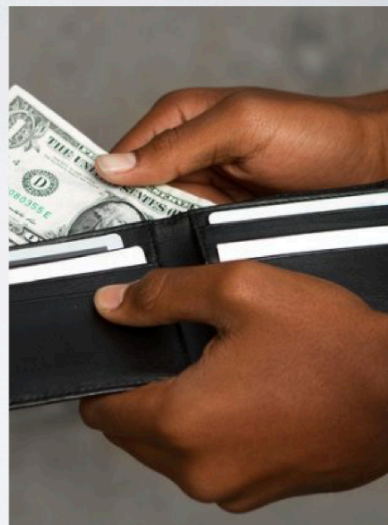
D. More than 50% - 1% of Pastors 3% Did Not Answer

9. How many approximate baptisms does your church conduct annually?

A. 0-15 - 67% B. 16-35 - 15% C. 36-50 - 9% D. 51-100 - 3% E. 100+ - 3% 3% Did Not Answer

INTRODUCTION TO STEWARDSHIP

- Genesis 14:17-24
- Acts 2:44-47 - Giving
- The Wealthiest African American Institution - \$12-14 Billion Annually
- WHAT IS THE BLACK CHURCH'S ROLE IN ADVANCING AFRICAN AMERICAN WEALTH? -
www.blackenterprise.com/does-the-black-church-matter/



COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS TO 100 PASTORS

Stewardship

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's approach to stewardship/giving? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

1. Giving expectations are clearly defined with Biblical support and pastoral appeals.

A. Strongly Agree - 50% B. Agree - 42% C. Disagree - 3% D. Strongly Disagree - 1% E. I Don't Know - 1% 3% Did Not Answer

2. Christian Education classes are provided that give doctrinal support to giving expectations and personal financial management.

A. Strongly Agree - 22% B. Agree - 55% C. Disagree - 15% D. Strongly Disagree - 4% E. I Don't Know - 1% 3% Did Not Answer

3. Capital improvements (roofing, plumbing, electrical, etc.) are addressed as emergencies with special appeals/offerings as needed.

A. Strongly Agree - 12% B. Agree - 45% C. Disagree - 25% D. Strongly Disagree - 14% E. I Don't Know - 1% 3% Did Not Answer

4. Our church has created a climate of transparency and anti-fraud financial management including regular meetings, audits and reviews.

A. Strongly Agree - 45% B. Agree - 40% C. Disagree - 9% D. Strongly Disagree - 3% E. I Don't Know - 0% 3% Did Not Answer

5. The church invests in digital platforms for giving via the internet, website, text-to-give, etc.

A. Strongly Agree - 41% B. Agree - 31% C. Disagree - 18% D. Strongly Disagree - 6% E. I Don't Know - 1% 3% Did Not Answer

6. Our church promotes special giving opportunities for scholarships, building funds, debt reduction, etc.

A. Strongly Agree - 33% B. Agree - 52% C. Disagree - 12% D. Strongly Disagree - 0% E. I Don't Know - 0% 3% Did Not Answer

7. Stewardship is taught as more than financial management but time, talent and asset management as well.

A. Strongly Agree - 48% B. Agree - 42% C. Disagree - 3% D. Strongly Disagree - 2% E. I Don't Know - 0% 3% Did Not Answer

8. After mortgage/rent and payroll obligations, which category represents the next greatest budgetary allocation? (Select One)

A. Worship & Multimedia - 29% B. Capital Improvements - 15% C. Christian Education - 10% D. Construction - 2% E. Program Events - 11% F. Administration - 13% G. Missions/Benevolence - 17% 3% Did Not Answer

9. Which church budgetary line items have decreased within the last 3 years? (Select All That Apply)

A. Missions/Benevolence - 12% B. Payroll - 22% C. Christian Education - 3% D. Capital Improvements - 10% E. Transportation - 14% F. Civic Contributions/Scholarships - 6% G. Program Events - 13% H. Building Fund - 12% G. Worship & Multimedia 4% 4% Did Not Answer

Concluding Consideration: Imagine how functional or dysfunctional church would be without evangelism and stewardship.

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APPENDIX J

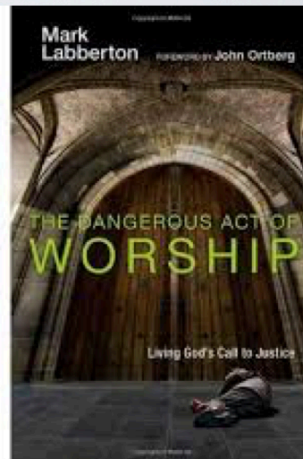
SEMINAR FIVE PRESENTATION: THE SERVICE PILLAR

REDEMPITIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE RELEVANT CHURCH:
ONE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH'S REPRESENTATION OF BIBLICAL CORE VALUES
A THESIS-PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY BY ERIC WENDEL LEE, SR.

Seminar Five: What Is The Church? Acts 2 - The Service Pillar of the Church

GREATEST OF ALL SERVANT OF ALL

- Worship names what matters most: the way human beings are created to reflect God's glory by embodying God's character in lives that seek righteousness and do justice. Such comprehensive worship redefines all we call ordinary. Worship turns out to be the dangerous act of waking up to God and to the purposes of God in the world, and then living lives that actually show it.
- When worship is our response to the One who alone is worthy of it- Jesus Christ-then our lives are on their way to being turned inside out.
- Beyond my own personal confession, my observations of other Christians and churches and the absence of any strong evidence to the contrary convinces me that the church is largely asleep-even if it doesn't look like it.
- Mark Labberton. The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God's Call to Justice (Kindle Locations 132-133).



AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH CRITIQUE

- Lincoln & Mima - *The Black Church in African American Experience* assert that if 80% of that era's black churches were to disappear, that the larger community would never miss them.
- E. Franklin Frazier - *The Negro Church in America*: "In a word, the Negroes have been forced into competition with whites in most areas of social life and their church can no longer serve as a refuge within the American community."
- Eddie Glaude, Jr. - "We have witnessed the routinization of black prophetic witness...where are the press conferences and impassioned efforts around black children living in poverty, and commercials and organizing around jobs and healthcare reform?"

UNIQUE NEEDS WITHIN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CONTEXT

- The Crisis of Education - Dropouts
- The Crisis of Mass Incarceration - Detention & the War on Drugs
- The Crisis of Health - Disease & Drugs
- The Crisis of Low Life Expectancy - Death & Family Violence
- The Crisis of Family - Divorce
- The Crisis of Poverty - Debt; The Crisis of Cultural Identity - Dignity

COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS TO 100 PASTORS

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how the following statements reflect your church's approach to outreach and community service? (Circle One Answer Per Statement)

1. My church believes in and seeks to responsibly implement the Tithing-The-Tithe principle (10% of church budget is provided to community service, benevolence, missions and other projects).

A. Strongly Agree - 35% B. Agree - 35% C. Disagree - 20% D. Strongly Disagree - 7% E. I Don't Know - 0% 3% Did Not Answer

2. My church routinely provides church wide service project opportunities.

A. Strongly Agree - 32% B. Agree - 39% C. Disagree - 22% D. Strongly Disagree - 2% E. I Don't Know - 1% 3% Did Not Answer

3. My church collaborates with other churches and para-church organizations to broaden its capacity to serve.

A. Strongly Agree - 32% B. Agree - 50% C. Disagree - 12% D. Strongly Disagree - 2% E. I Don't Know - 1% 3% Did Not Answer

4. My church seldom if ever engages in service projects that do not originate from church leadership or membership.

A. Strongly Agree - 5% B. Agree - 24% C. Disagree - 52% D. Strongly Disagree - 15% E. I Don't Know - 1% 3% Did Not Answer

5. My church intentionally celebrates and promotes our service project accomplishments.

A. Strongly Agree - 19% B. Agree - 66% C. Disagree - 8% D. Strongly Disagree - 2% E. I Don't Know - 2% 3% Did Not Answer

6. My church is known throughout the community for making significant contributions to service projects.

A. Strongly Agree - 26% B. Agree - 44% C. Disagree - 18% D. Strongly Disagree - 4% E. I Don't Know - 5% 3% Did Not Answer

7. My church works to diminish the impact of poverty.

A. Strongly Agree - 29% B. Agree - 51% C. Disagree - 12% D. Strongly Disagree - 3% E. I Don't Know - 2% 3% Did Not Answer

8. As a service delivery agency in the African American community, which areas of service does your church contribute to directly? (Select All That Apply)

A. Food Distribution - 71% B. Scholarships - 59% C. Healthcare/Medicine/Health Education - 47% D. Funeral Assistance - 52% E. Mentoring - 45% F. Senior Housing/Services - 15%
H. Partnerships with Public Schools - 59% I. Community Watch - 17% J. Narcotics/Alcohol Anonymous - 18% K. Prison Ministry - 30% L. Foreign Missions - 37%
M. Human Trafficking/Sex Industry - 8% N. Refugee Assistance - 3% O. Homelessness/Affordable Housing - 31% P. Pastoral Care/Spiritual Direction - 63% Others: 12%

9. What approximate percentage of your church membership directly contributes to or participates in service projects and initiatives?

A. Zero - 0% of Pastors projects - 1% of Pastors B. Under 10% - 21% of Pastors C. 10%-25% - 38% of Pastors D. 26%-50% - 26% of Pastors E. 51% or more - 14% of Pastors F. No service

Concluding Consideration: Imagine how functional or dysfunctional the church would be without service to its larger community? What factors may have contributed to a reduction of community service?

APPENDIX K

SEMINAR SIX PRESENTATION: WHAT IS THIS CHURCH?

REDEMPITIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE RELEVANT CHURCH:
ONE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH'S REPRESENTATION OF BIBLICAL CORE VALUES
A THESIS-PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY BY ERIC WENDEL LEE, SR.
Seminar Six: What Is This Church?
The Redemptive Plan

GUARDRAILS



CORE BELIEFS AND CORE VALUES

- The First Baptist Church of Piney Grove - Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Dr. Derrick Hughes
- “The Living Church”1) **Partnership** (becoming committed believers)2) **Precept** (maturing as disciples of Jesus)3) **Participation** (serving in ministry) 4) **Purpose** (fulfilling the great commandment) 5) **Protection** (nurturing and strengthening families)6) **Progress** (impacting communities for the cause of Christ)7) **Praise** (worshipping God in all we do).

CORE BELIEFS AND CORE VALUES

- Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, PA -
Dr. Darryl Canady
- “Community of Hope” - 6 pillars Spiritual, Physical/Recreation, Educational, Social, Economic/Employment, Health/Wellness
- 3 aspirational goals within 6 pillars -Community of Hope 1) Grow the spiritual and social lives of people of all ages (Relationships) 2) Enhance education, economic and employment opportunities in the community (Skills) 3) Improve Access to Health services and enhance physical well being (Wellness).

CORE BELIEFS AND CORE VALUES

- Ray Of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, GA - Dr. Cynthia Hale
- The Mission - Transforming your world through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Vision - To be a City of Hope where people will impact and transform our present world into the Kingdom of God!
- The Core Values - 1) **Exalt** the Savior 2) **Equip** the Saint 3) **Evangelize** the Seeker 4) **Empower** through Stewardship 5) **Elevate** Society

CORE BELIEFS AND CORE VALUES

- Springfield Baptist Church Conyers, GA
- Rev. Eric W. Lee
- G.R.O.W.T.H. **G**rowing through God's Word. **R**econnecting Generations through Worship & Fellowship. **O**perating in our Spiritual Gifts. **W**inning the Community. **T**ithing in Love and Obedience to our God. **H**elping to Empower the World

THE FUTURE OF THIS CHURCH:

WHO DO THEY SAY THAT WE ARE?
WHO DO WE SAY THAT WE ARE?

- Christian Education - ?
- Worship - ?
- Fellowship - ?
- Evangelism - ?
- Stewardship - ?

HOW WILL THIS CHURCH MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
WHAT UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS WILL YOUR CHURCH MAKE TO
THE REDEMPTION OF ITS LARGER COMMUNITY?

- Service - ?

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VITA

Name: Eric Wendel Lee, Sr.

Date and Place of Birth: September 13, 1971, Atlanta, GA

Education/Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, History, Morehouse College, 1993

Master of Divinity, Ethics, Religion & Society, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 1996

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry:

Track: Redemptive Leadership in the African American Context

Residency: September 2010 - September 2012

Expected Graduation: January 2020